

University of Alberta

**Making Connections, Strengthening Community:
The Development of a Homeless Youth Intervention**

by

Lisa Connery



**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfillment**

of the requirements for the degree of *Master of Science*

in

Family Ecology & Practice

Department of *Human Ecology*

**Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 2005**



Library and
Archives Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

0-494-08040-X

Published Heritage
Branch

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*

ISBN:

Our file *Notre référence*

ISBN:

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.


Canada

Dedication

To my parents
For always believing.

To Travis
For being there.

Abstract

In this qualitative study, a grounded theory approach was used to design a program that links university students with homeless youth in a supportive relationship. Five individual interviews were conducted with service providers from Cunningham Place, a transitional housing facility for homeless youth. Three focus group interviews, for a total of fifteen students and two focus groups, for a total of thirteen homeless youth were also conducted. Findings revealed that this program should involve a cultural exchange between university students and homeless youth where the focus is on providing participants with an opportunity to learn about each other's culture, with the intention of increasing understanding. Details for program implementation are discussed and a program manual is included.

Acknowledgements

This research project would not have been possible without the support from the following people:

To Dr. Brenda Munro, my thesis supervisor, for her enthusiasm, vision and dedication to the project.

To Dr. Deanna Williamson, my committee member, for her patience, for sharing her expertise and providing invaluable feedback.

To Dr. Judith Golec, my committee member, for her quiet wisdom and for always pushing me to think beyond.

To the research team, for always listening, for sharing your ideas and your passion for the project.

To Tanis Twiddy, for keeping me sane, for never tiring of the sound of my voice, for being my friend.

A special thanks to Native Counselling Services of Alberta and Cunningham Place for supporting this project.

To all of the respondents of this study, without your ideas and input, this program could not have been developed.

Table of Contents

		Page
Chapter I	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Project Background.....	4
	Purpose and Objectives of the Study.....	5
	Definitions.....	6
	Using Human Ecology as a Guiding Framework.....	6
Chapter II	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
	On-time versus Off-time Leaving.....	11
	<i>Transition into Adulthood.....</i>	<i>11</i>
	<i>Early-Leavers: Family Structure and Socio-Demographic Influences.....</i>	<i>13</i>
	Negative Effects of Early Home Leaving.....	15
	<i>Early-Leaving: The Path Homelessness.....</i>	<i>15</i>
	<i>Transience in Families of Origin.....</i>	<i>16</i>
	<i>Abuse in Families of Origin.....</i>	<i>17</i>
	(1) Physical Abuse in Families of Origin.....	17
	(2) Sexual Abuse in Families of Origin.....	19
	<i>Lack of Attachment, Connection and Support in Families of Origin.....</i>	<i>20</i>
	<i>Social and Cultural Deprivation.....</i>	<i>22</i>
	<i>Parental Drug and Alcohol Use.....</i>	<i>22</i>
	<i>Other Explanations for Youth Homelessness.....</i>	<i>23</i>
	People and Factors that Influence the Behaviors of Homeless Youth.....	24

Table of Contents

		Page
	<i>Fictive Street Families</i>	24
	<i>Peer Groups</i>	25
	<i>Service Providers and Positive Role Models</i>	26
	The Importance of Studying Homelessness and Planning Interventions.....	27
Chapter III	RESEARCH METHOD	31
	Qualitative Research: A Brief Introduction.....	31
	Constraints Around this Research.....	32
	Data Collection and Analysis: The Grounded Theory Approach.....	33
	Sampling.....	34
	<i>Purposeful Sampling</i>	34
	(1) Service Providers.....	34
	(2) University Students.....	35
	(3) Homeless Youth.....	36
	<i>Theoretical Sampling</i>	37
	<i>Saturation</i>	37
	Data Collection.....	38
	<i>Interviews and Focus Groups</i>	38
	Ethical Considerations.....	41
	<i>Informed Consent</i>	41
	<i>Confidentiality</i>	42

Table of Contents

	Page
Data Analysis.....	43
<i>Open Coding</i>	43
<i>Axial Coding</i>	44
<i>Selective Coding</i>	45
Memo Writing and Diagrams.....	46
<i>Reflexivity</i>	47
Rigour in Qualitative Research.....	47
<i>Credibility</i>	48
<i>Transferability</i>	48
<i>Dependability</i>	49
<i>Confirmability</i>	49
Conclusion.....	51
Chapter IV FINDINGS	52
Service Provider Results.....	55
Category: Limited Experience.....	55
(1) <i>Sub-Category: Broadening Perspectives</i> ...	55
(2) <i>Sub-Category: Support for the Overall Program Idea</i>	56
Category: Reciprocal Relationships.....	56
(1) <i>Sub-Category: Cultural/Mutual Exchange</i> .	56
(2) <i>Sub-Category: Student Role</i>	58
(3) <i>Sub-Category: Homeless Youth Role</i>	60

Table of Contents

	Page
(4) <i>Sub-Category: Service Provider Role</i>	61
(5) <i>Sub-Category: Barriers</i>	63
(6) <i>Sub-Category: Relationship Formation</i>	66
Category: Necessary Program Components.....	67
(1) <i>Sub-Category: Goals & Objectives</i>	67
(2) <i>Sub-Category: Program Activities</i>	70
(3) <i>Sub-Category: Structure</i>	73
(4) <i>Sub-Category: Orientation</i>	77
Category: Safety.....	79
(1) <i>Sub-Category: Boundaries</i>	80
(2) <i>Sub-Category: Potential Safety Issues and Maintaining Personal Safety</i>	82
Student Results.....	84
Category: Limited Experience.....	85
(1) <i>Sub-Category: Broadening Perspectives</i> ...	86
(2) <i>Sub-Category: Hesitation & Uncertainty</i> ...	87
(3) <i>Sub-Category: Support for the Overall Program Idea</i>	88
Category: Reciprocal Relationships.....	88
(1) <i>Sub-Category: Cultural/Mutual Exchange</i> .	88
(2) <i>Sub-Category: Student Role</i>	91
(3) <i>Sub-Category: Homeless Youth Role</i>	92

Table of Contents

	Page
(4) <i>Sub-Category: Service Provider/ Coordinator Role</i>	93
(5) <i>Sub-Category: Barriers</i>	93
Category: Necessary Program Components.....	94
(1) <i>Sub-Category: Goals & Objectives</i>	94
(2) <i>Sub-Category: Program Activities</i>	96
(3) <i>Sub-Category: Structure</i>	99
(4) <i>Sub-Category: Orientation</i>	103
Category: Safety.....	106
(1) <i>Sub-Category: Boundaries</i>	106
(2) <i>Sub-Category: Potential Safety Issues and Maintaining Personal Safety</i>	108
(3) <i>Sub-Category: Mediation</i>	109
Homeless Youth Results.....	110
Category: Limited Experience.....	110
(5) <i>Sub-Category: Broadening Perspectives</i>	110
(2) <i>Sub-Category: Hesitation & Uncertainty</i> ...	114
(3) <i>Sub-Category: Support for the Overall Program Idea</i>	115
Category: Reciprocal Relationships.....	115
(1) <i>Sub-Category: Cultural/Mutual Exchange</i> .	115
(2) <i>Sub-Category: Student Role</i>	116
(3) <i>Sub-Category: Homeless Youth Role</i>	118

Table of Contents

	Page
<i>(4) Sub-Category: Service Provider/ Coordinator Role.....</i>	118
<i>(5) Sub-Category: Barriers.....</i>	118
<i>(6) Sub-Category: Relationship Formation.....</i>	120
Category: Necessary Program Components.....	121
<i>(1) Sub-Category: Goals & Objectives.....</i>	121
<i>(6) Sub-Category: Program Activities.....</i>	123
<i>(7) Sub-Category: Structure.....</i>	126
<i>(8) Sub-Category: Orientation.....</i>	128
Category: Safety.....	129
<i>(1) Sub-Category: Boundaries.....</i>	129
<i>(2) Sub-Category: Potential Safety Issues and Maintaining Personal Safety.....</i>	130
Methodological Issues and Limitations.....	131
<i>Recruitment Challenges.....</i>	131
<i>Data Collection Issues.....</i>	131
<i>Audiotaping.....</i>	133
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	133
Chapter V DISCUSSION.....	135
<i>Rationale.....</i>	<i>135</i>
<i>Shift From Mentorship to Cultural Exchange.....</i>	<i>137</i>
<i>Creating Cultural Exchange: Developing Program Goals.....</i>	<i>138</i>

Table of Contents

	Page
Program Structure.....	140
<i>Focus</i>	140
<i>Organization</i>	141
(1) <i>Program Participants and Recruitment Strategies</i>	142
(2) <i>Size and Age</i>	143
(3) <i>Length and Time</i>	144
(4) <i>Location</i>	145
(5) <i>Roles</i>	146
Orientation.....	147
Program Session.....	151
Safety.....	153
Limitations of the Study.....	154
Additional Findings and Future Directions.....	156
Implications.....	159
Conclusion.....	159
REFERENCES	161
APPENDICES	184
Appendix A – Interview Questions.....	184
<i>Service Provider Interview Questions</i>	185
<i>Student Focus Group Questions</i>	185
<i>Homeless Youth Focus Group Questions</i>	186

Table of Contents

	Page
Appendix B – Information Sheets.....	188
<i>Service Provider Information Sheet</i>	188
<i>Student Information Sheet</i>	190
<i>Homeless Youth Information Sheet</i>	192
Appendix C – Informed Consent Forms.....	194
<i>Service Provider Informed Consent Form</i>	194
<i>Student Informed Consent Form</i>	196
<i>Homeless Youth Informed Consent Form</i>	198
Appendix D – Program Manual.....	200
Appendix E - Ethical Guidelines.....	236
Appendix F – Student Affiliation Agreement.....	238
Appendix G – Waiver Form.....	241
Appendix H – Working Alone Protocol.....	242

Chapter I - Introduction

Homelessness in Edmonton is a growing concern that needs to be addressed.

Today, there are approximately 1,900 homeless people living in unsuitable or unstable housing or on the streets of Edmonton. Included in this total homeless count are youth, who make up 7% of the total population (Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Homelessness, 2002). Furthermore, within the homeless population, Aboriginal people are found to be over-represented. Although only about 4% of the population in Edmonton are Aboriginal people, approximately 40% of the total number of homeless are Aboriginal (Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Homelessness, 2002). This overrepresentation of Aboriginal people and the high percentage of youth that live on the street or who are at risk of becoming homeless warrants further attention by researchers and the community alike.

Homeless youth in Edmonton face many challenges in negotiating life on the streets. They often come from families where there have been high rates of abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, other family of origin issues and poverty (Munro, LaBoucane-Benson & Benson, 2003; Novac et al., 2002). Once these young people are on the streets, they must struggle on a daily basis to meet their basic needs, including finding a place to sleep and food to eat. This constant struggle is often exacerbated by no family support and a lack of on-going, stable assistance from people outside of their families (Social Support Research Program, 2004).

In addition, homeless youth are at risk for adverse health effects, violence, drug use and participation in criminal and risky behavior (Casavant, 1999; Chenier,

1999; Novac et al., 2002). In Edmonton, homeless youth are more likely to contract Hepatitis C, infections, respiratory and circulation problems, influenza and sexually transmitted diseases (Novac et al., 2002). Furthermore, many homeless youth experience mental illness and addictions, suffer from physical and sexual abuse, are involved in prostitution, engage in criminal activity and are exposed to theft (CMHC, 2001; Casavant, 1999; Chenier, 1999; Novac et al., 2002). When all of these issues are taken into account, it becomes clear that youth homelessness is an important issue in today's society that must be addressed.

Prior research in Edmonton called for an increase in services that meet the needs of homeless youth (Social Support Research Program, 2004). This recommendation was based on findings from interviews conducted with homeless youth (Social Support Research Program, 2004). Specifically, homeless youth commented on "the need to have someone in their lives who would be willing to listen, be understanding and trustworthy, and help them reflect upon their choices" (Social Support Research Program, 2004, p. 7). In addition, the homeless youth reported a need for unconditional support from people who are non-judgmental. Finally, the youth identified that they lacked awareness of services that are available to them and need information that is both personalized and youth oriented (Social Support Research Program, 2004). In an effort to meet these needs, the aim of this research project is to create a program that involves supportive relationships between homeless youth and university students. One of the objectives of the research was to gather data from homeless youth, students and service providers about their needs and wants to design a program that enables the homeless youth to move towards their

goals and to gain access to services that are available to them. A grounded theory approach to data analysis was utilized to ensure that the needs and concerns of the key stakeholders are central in program development.

One type of program discussed in the literature that could meet the aforementioned needs of homeless youth in Edmonton is a mentorship program (de Anda, 2001; Terry, 1999). One-to-one mentoring has been shown to have a positive impact on the well being of young people and can help to exert a protective effect against risk behaviors among high-risk children and youth (Salzman, 2000; Westhues, Clarke, Watton & St. Claire-Smith, 2001; Yancey, Siegel & McDaniel, 2002). Furthermore, Hurley & Lustbader (1997) found that mentoring sessions allowed young people to develop personal resiliency within a safe environment. According to Westhues et al. (2001), "there is reasonably conclusive evidence in the literature that one-to-one mentoring has positive effects on the development of children who have experienced adversity" (p. 491).

In addition, being involved in a peer support or mentorship program has positive effects for both the mentor and the mentee (Salzman, 2000; Terry, 1999). Salzman (2000) found that mentors gained an awareness of differences between cultures and the issues faced by young people. Mentees developed a stronger and more positive ethnic identity, showed increased levels of self-esteem and demonstrated a decrease in unhealthy risk-taking behaviors (Hibbard et al, 2002; Yancey et al., 2002). Also, peer support can enhance an individual's sense of empowerment and ability to cope with challenges (Hibbard et al., 2002). Furthermore, mentors and mentees agreed that the relationship in a mentorship

program is special in that it offers a supportive and trustworthy listener and a caring sounding board (de Anda, 2001). By developing bonds with mentors, young people have been able to make major positive developments, both emotionally and socially, which can significantly change the trajectory of their lives (de Anda, 2001).

Although no programs found in the literature focused on homeless youth, there were examples where mentorship programs were used effectively with high-risk populations. Because the literature has supported the use of mentorship programs in a variety of settings and the proposal for this project suggested the use of a mentorship or a similar supportive relationship program as a possibility, it is fitting to base the program for homeless youth on some of the mentorship program concepts.

Project Background

This research fits under the umbrella of a larger project about youth homelessness that consists of three parts: a development phase, a longitudinal study and an implementation phase (Munro, LaBoucane-Benson & Wild, 2003). The first phase includes the development of a mentorship or a supportive relationship program and the development of an outcome evaluation tool to assess this program.

Constraints exist around this research because the basic ideas for the development phase were formed before I joined the research team. It had already been decided that a program that links university students and homeless youth in some sort of supportive relationship would be the basis for the program. Starting at the same time as the development phase, the longitudinal portion of the study will also commence. The longitudinal study aims to provide a rich profile of the experiences of homeless youth over time (i.e. with respect to experiences with relationships, housing,

education, employment and safety). The longitudinal portion is not specifically meant to develop or evaluate the impact of the supportive relationship program, however, information about the success of the program may come from interviews and focus groups as some individuals may be involved in the program after it is implemented. Finally, the third part of the larger project includes the implementation and evaluation of the program that will be designed in the first part. Although each part is separate, the research team will be involved to varying degrees in all parts of the project through meetings and on-going discussions with the research team members.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this research was to develop a program that will link homeless youth and university students in a supportive relationship and that meets the needs of all key stakeholders. The program will be implemented as a pilot project at Cunningham Place, which is a transitional housing facility that provides accommodations and services to homeless young people in Edmonton. As Cunningham Place is already established as a place for homeless youth to receive services, it served as the central location for this investigation.

In order to accomplish the objectives of this study, the program design is based primarily on data collected from key stakeholders, but also incorporates relevant literature. The guiding research question for this project is, "What do key stakeholders want a program, which involves a supportive relationship between university students and homeless youth, to look like?"

Definitions

For the purpose of this investigation, young people are defined as homeless if they have no home at all and are living on the streets; they are living in a place that was not intended to be housing or is not a suitable long term residence; or they are at risk of becoming homeless through losing their home, being discharged from an institution/facility with nowhere to go, or through loss of income support (Social Support Research Program, 2004). In order to be defined as a homeless youth, the young person must be between the ages of 18 and 29 years.

Using Human Ecology Theory as a Guiding Framework

In this investigation, human ecology theory served as a guiding framework for the literature review. Human ecology theory is a broad theory that holds many assumptions about the nature of humans and family life. One of the main assumptions of this theory is that context influences human behavior, quality of life and overall well being (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). According to a human ecological perspective, context includes various layers that are intricately connected through reciprocal interactions. Moving from the microsystem, which consists of interpersonal relations in face-to-face settings, to the macrosystem, which encompasses belief systems and policy making, human ecology theory focuses on the interdependence of these systems in order to understand human behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994) "human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and

symbols in its immediate environment" (p. 1644). This insight is important in that it highlights the importance of interaction with people and the environment in order to develop as a human.

By drawing on the assumption that context plays a central role in influencing human behavior, quality of life and overall well being, this investigation will seek to design a program that considers the various contexts that affect the lives of homeless youth. In addition, it will also recognize that there are various layers to the lives of homeless youth that are intricately connected and involve reciprocal interactions between youth and others.

For the purpose of the literature review, the principle of family as context, serves as a starting point in understanding some of the reasons for youth homelessness. First, human ecology theory contests that individuals are influenced by interpersonal relationships with family members (Badir, 1993). The types of interactions that occur between family members can either promote or discourage positive growth and determine how individuals interact with others in the world around them. Some of the family of origin issues that discourage growth and lead to homelessness, including lack of attachment and abuse, will be discussed in detail in the following section. Second, human ecology theory also asserts that interactions between members of families are reciprocal and influence one another (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Therefore, parental actions influence children and vice versa. This is important in that it outlines the role that the youth play within the family situation. Finally, agency is also an important concept. Human ecology theory recognizes that as individuals, we exert a certain amount of control over our lives and have the ability

to make changes to improve our lives and well-being (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993).

Agency is key in understanding why youth choose to leave the family of origin in search of bettering their lives, even if that choice involves living on the street.

In terms of homeless youth, human ecology theory directs our attention by increasing our understanding of how the environment, including relationships within the family, influence behaviors and decision-making. Additionally, it provides a broad definition of family, which encompasses many different family types, including fictive street families. For example, homeless youth may develop family-like relationships with other homeless people, including the use of familial names such as brother or mother. This broad definition recognizes that homeless youth often develop new families, which offer the support that was missing in their families of origin. Finally, human ecology theory takes a holistic approach, which recognizes that quality of life depends on material goods that are available, the environment and the quality social interaction (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). By acknowledging that it is a combination of factors that lead to homelessness, a better understanding of the complex nature of youth homelessness results.

Chapter II - Literature Review

Review of the literature is an important part of research. When utilizing the grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis, as was used in this study, literature was reviewed both prior to the commencement of data collection and during the analysis phase (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The general reading completed prior to collecting data allowed me to approach the area of interest with some background knowledge (Cutcliffe, 2000, Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In following with the grounded theory approach, a background literature review should sensitize the researcher to the topic under study without providing more than a partial framework of concepts to be investigated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In this chapter, literature about youth homelessness and family of origin issues is presented. First, the reasons for on-time versus off-time leaving are discussed. This is followed by a summary of some of the negative effects of early home leaving, including youth homelessness. Second, the family of origin issues that often lead to early home leaving and ultimately homelessness are summarized. This section also includes other explanations for youth homelessness that are not necessarily family of origin issues. Next, literature pertaining to the people and factors that influence the youth once they are living on the streets is reviewed. This includes literature on fictive street families, peer groups, service providers and positive role models. To end this chapter, the need for interventions based on research is established.

The decision to review this literature was threefold. First, this literature reflects key human ecological concepts, which recognize that interpersonal relationships affect development and can lead to positive or negative outcomes.

Although family of origin issues may not seem pertinent once the youth are living on the streets, human ecological theory contends that the past, present and future are all interrelated (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Therefore, family of origin issues continue to influence the lives of homeless youth, which is an important consideration when designing a program. The literature also pointed to the importance of establishing positive relationships, which can play a protective role in the lives of homeless youth. Second, this literature offered insight into some of the issues that homeless youth face, which increased my sensitivity. This sensitivity helped me to relate to homeless youth during data collection, which was vital for program development. It also allowed me to understand some of the barriers and challenges that could be present during the program and that need to be addressed during orientation for the program participants. Third, the call for program planning based on the needs of homeless youth was established in the literature, (Bao et al., 2000; Kipke & Unger, 1997; McCaskill et al., 1998; Rew & Horner, 2003) which confirmed the prior decision made by those involved in the larger research project that a program should be developed.

After initial data collection and analysis, additional literature was reviewed that helped to strengthen concepts found in the data. Delaying a complete review of the literature until after data were collected ensured that pre-existing constructs did not shape subsequent program development (Mellion & Tovin, 2002). This ensured that the program is based primarily on the data from the stakeholders and not on preconceived ideas obtained from the literature.

On-time versus Off-time Leaving

The concept of time plays an important role in human ecology theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The actions that humans take over time are related to one another and are influenced by the past, the present and the future (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). The timing at which a young person leaves his or her parental home in order to move to an independent living arrangement is influenced by many environmental factors and effect a young person throughout the rest of their life (Clemens & Axelson, 1985; Garasky, Haurin & Haurin, 2001; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1989; 1998; White & Lacy, 1997). Although many young people leave home to go to college or to enter the labor force, there is a small but important minority who leave home to escape a negative family situation and end up living in unstable situations or on the streets (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Bao, Whitbeck & Hoyt, 2000; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1998; Novac, Serge, Eberle & Brown, 2002; Stephen, 2000). The decision to leave home is usually an orderly process of independence that enables an adolescent to move towards adulthood, but can have detrimental effects if the adolescent leaves too early due to underlying negative family of origin issues.

Transition into Adulthood

Past literature involving transition into adulthood has looked at several factors surrounding the decision to leave home. One of the reasons that young people in today's society leave home is to attend post-secondary education (Avery, Goldscheider & Speare Jr., 1992; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1998; Holmstrom, Karp & Gray, 2002; White & Lacy, 1997). Twenty to twenty-five percent of children leave their parental homes in order to pursue an education (Goldscheider &

Goldscheider, 1998; White & Lacy, 1997). Leaving to attend college is more likely to occur in families where young people were raised by the same two parents for their entire childhood or were raised by a non-parental member of the family since the age of twelve (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1998). In addition, young adults are more likely to attend college if parents have higher education levels, have more prestigious occupational status and higher income (Cooney & Mortimer, 1999; White & Lacy, 1997; Zhao, Rajulton & Ravanera, 1995). Research has shown that these factors allow parents to create "aspirations and opportunities that reproduce their social status in their children" (White & Lacy, 1997, p. 983). Therefore, continued parental support, including financial support, is critical in helping young people to attend college in order to maximize status attainment (Cooney & Mortimer, 1999; White & Lacy, 1997).

Another common reason for leaving home is to enter the labor force and support oneself (Aquilino, 1991; 1997; Garasky, et al., 2001; White & Lacy, 1997; Zhao et al., 1995). Prior research has found that when females and males earn a wage that can support them, they are more likely to move out of their parent's home than if they are earning a low wage (Cooney & Mortimer, 1999; Garasky et al., 2001).

The ability for the family to adjust to this transition in a positive manner depends on a variety of factors (Harkins, 1978; Neugarten, 1976; Nichols, 1984; Targ, 1979). One of the most important factors is whether leaving home is considered 'on-time' or 'off-time' according to societal standards (Neugarten, 1976). When events are 'on-time' (i.e., leaving home after age 18) with societal norms there is likely to be a period of anticipatory socialization and adjustment prior to the

launching time of the young person (Nichols, 1984). The distinction between anticipated versus unanticipated leaving is important in the adjustment of the entire family (Neugarten, 1976). When both the parents and the young adult feel that the residential split is appropriate and normal, it is more likely that there will be an easy transition towards independent living (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1989; Targ, 1979). On the other hand, "being off-schedule with respect to the expected timing of transition appears to have (psychologically and physiologically) adverse effects" for young people (Harkins, 1978, p. 549).

The adjustments that families have to make when leaving is on-time versus off-time reflect the human ecological concept that change in one part of a family system influences other parts in the system (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Families in this situation must learn to successfully adapt to a new structure and new roles must be adopted in order to continue to meet the needs of individuals within the family (Badir, 1993). As family members are both autonomous individuals and dependent on each other, individual functioning is influenced by how well each member adapts to the changing structure (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). In the case of early-leavers, it seems that family and individual functioning decreases and outcomes are poorer, than if a young person leaves home in accordance with societal norms (Harkins, 1978).

Early-Leavers: Family Structure and Socio-Demographic Influences

The family structure is one factor that influences whether young people will leave home early (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Aquilino, 1991; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1989; 1998; Mitchell, Wister & Burch, 1989; Tavecchio, Thomeer & Meeus, 1999). Prior research has shown that living in a family that involves

stepparents and stepsiblings results in earlier leaving (Aquilino, 1991; Cooney & Mortimer, 1999; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1989; 1998; Mitchell et al., 1989; Zhao et al., 1995). Aquilino (1991) and Mitchell (1994) found that living in any non-biological family increases the probability of early transition to residential independence and also decreases the likelihood of school attendance.

Divorced and single parent families have also received attention in prior research (Aquilino, 1991; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1998; Tavecchio et al., 1999). Differences in early leaving were found based on when the divorce occurred and whether the single parent family had remained stable throughout the child's life. In cases where family disruption resulted in a single parent home, there was an increased chance of early emancipation (Aquilino, 1991; Zhao et al., 1995). On the other hand, early home leavers were not found in cases where children were raised in a stable single parent household throughout their lives (Aquilino, 1991; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1998). The difference that leads adolescents towards early leaving to escape their family situation instead of for productive employment or education seems to lie, at least partially, in family instability and can result in different outcomes (Mitchell et al., 1989; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1998).

Lastly, institutional, foster care or adopted arrangements have also been linked to early-leaving by youth (Aquilino, 1991; CMHC, 2001; Penzerro, 2003; Tavecchio et al., 1999). Both males and females who were living in situations with neither biological parent were more likely to be early-leavers compared with those living in other family living arrangements (Aquilino, 1991). Children in this group are also at a high risk for becoming homeless after they leave care (Commander, Davis, McCabe

& Stanyer, 2002; Guinn, 2000; Penzerro, 2003; Piliavin, Sosin, Westerfelt & Matsueda, 1993; Tavecchio et al., 1999; van Wormer, 2003). In Canada, this often happens as a result of gaps in the child welfare system and social services for adolescents who are over the age of sixteen. Many youth who are 16 and 17 years old are not eligible for income assistance and as a result, they often end up living on the streets (Fitzgerald, 1995). These gaps do not support young people and can result in youth homelessness.

Negative Effects of Early Home Leaving

There are many negative effects associated with being independent at an early age (Aquilino, 1991; Chassin, Proessin, Sherman & Edwards, 1992; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1998; Mitchell et al., 1989; White & Lacy, 1997). Children who leave the parental home early are more likely to make bad decisions including the formation of less appropriate unions, less conventional lifestyles and are more likely to place short term pleasure over long-term investments in their training (White & Lacy, 1997). Furthermore, establishing independent living before the age of 18 has long term implications for the adult life course that include limited occupational and educational advancement, failed marriage, and a limited earning potential (Aquilino, 1991; Mitchell, 1994). Early home leaving can become a causal chain that links prior disadvantages to subsequent disadvantages (Aquilino, 1991; Mitchell, 1994).

Early-Leaving: The Path to Homelessness

One of the most negative effects of early home leaving is that it can lead to homelessness (Bao et al., 2000; Jackson-Wilson & Borgers, 1993; Mitchell, 1994; van Wormer, 2003). Although adequate socialization is not guaranteed when there is

structural unity in the home, the absence of this unity "creates serious liabilities especially among lower class persons whose environment usually does not include conditions that reduce the impact of family disorganization" (Jackson-Wilson & Borgers, 1993, p.363). Adolescents who make the decision to live on the streets often do so as the result of being raised in transient, conflict filled and dysfunctional families (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Bao et al., 2000; Commander et al., 2002; Votta & Manion, 2003).

Transience in Families of Origin

Previous research has found that having a transient childhood, which involves frequent moves, frequent changes in parental employment, changes in caretakers and changes in the people who live in the home increases the likelihood of homelessness (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Paradise et al., 2001). High levels of transience during childhood emerged as practices instead of events in these young people's lives and they accepted this way of living as normal. Once these adolescents become homeless, this transient lifestyle is likely to continue throughout adulthood as they negotiate life on the streets (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Reganik, 1997). In addition, adolescents who are currently homeless report more child-initiated living transitions (i.e. independently choosing to live with friends or relatives and running away) due to abuse in the home and they have tended to spend a substantial amount of time on their own (Bao et al., 2000; Paradise et al., 2001). They experience more independence from adult supervision and become more dependent on peers for emotional and instrumental support than young people who live in stable family situations (Kipke & Unger, 1997; McCarthy, Hagan & Martin, 2002; Paradise et al., 2001). This lack of

parental supervision can lead the young people to associate with peers who engage in risky behaviors, which can have negative implications including increased delinquency and substance use (Baron & Hartnagel, 1998; Bao et al., 2000; McCaskill, Toro & Wolfe, 1998).

Abuse in Families of Origin

Besides increased conflict, abuse within the home is prevalent and has been well documented within the family and homeless youth literature (Baron & Hartnagel, 1998; Mounier & Andujo, 2003; Ryan, Kilmer, Cauce, Wantanabe, Hoyt, 2000; Rew, 2002; Simons & Whitbeck, 1991; Tyler & Cauce, 2002; Stein, Leslie & Nyamathi, 2002; Whitbeck, Hoyt & Bao, 2000; Whitbeck, Hoyt, Yoder, Cauce, Paradise, 2001). Physical and sexual abuse are the two types of abuse that have been researched extensively.

(1) Physical Abuse in Families of Origin.

Between 50-80% of homeless youth have experienced physical abuse or violence within the home (CMHC, 2001; Jainchill, Hawke, Yagelka, 2000; Rew & Horner, 2003; Ringwalt et al., 1998; Tyler & Cauce, 2002; Whitbeck et al., 2001). Being subject to childhood abuse is so prevalent in these families that homeless youth often assume this behavior is the norm (Anderson & Imle, 2001). Types of abuse range from being beaten up, having objects thrown at them, being pushed, shoved or slapped, being punched, or having been threatened or harmed by a weapon (Tyler & Cauce, 2002; Whitbeck et al., 2001). Hartwell (2003) found that the use of threats and weapons were commonplace and physical violence was often accompanied by emotional abuse due to the experience of being exposed to trauma and fear.

Perpetrators of physical abuse often were biological parents or other family members including siblings and stepparents (Bao et al., 2000; Mounier & Andujo, 2003; Tyler & Cauce, 2002). Tyler & Cauce, (2002) also found that 67% of young people said that the abuse was extremely violent and 21% said that they needed hospital care for their injuries. Research done by Baron & Hartnagal (1998) showed that physical abuse of homeless youth by family members was "serial and extremely intense and displayed a savageness that could only serve to physically damage the child" (p. 183). These acts were not accidental. Rates of abuse for self identified gay, lesbian or bisexuals, were higher than for heterosexual males or females (Tyler & Cauce, 2002).

Being the victim of family abuse often results in more violence and problems on the streets (Baron & Hartnagal, 1998; Stein et al., 2002; Whitbeck et al., 2000). Young people who live in abusive homes learn that compliance can be gained through the use of physical force (Baron & Hartnagal, 1998). Using violence is seen as a practical and effective way to get what they want from someone else. Although violence against others can increase compliance, it also can make a homeless young person more vulnerable to victimization and retribution from others, which exacerbates the abuse experienced within the home and perpetuates the abuse cycle (Stein et al., 2002; Whitbeck et al., 2001; Yoder, Whitbeck & Hoyt, 2003). In addition to increased victimization, childhood abuse experienced by homeless youth has also been shown to predict a wide range of problems such as committing aggravated assault, depression, low self esteem and daily alcohol and drug use (Baron, 1999; Baron & Hartnagal, 1998; Nyamathi, Longshore, Keenan, Lesser & Leake, 2001; Stein et al., 2002). Childhood abuse has been found to be the most

devastating and pervasive factor in predicting dysfunctional outcomes among homeless youth (Stein et al., 2002).

(2) Sexual Abuse in Families of Origin.

In addition to physical abuse, history of sexual abuse is also prevalent in homeless youth populations (Mounier & Andujo, 2003; Rew, 2002; Ryan et al., 2000; Simons & Whitbeck, 1991; Tyler & Cauce, 2002, Whitbeck et al. 2000; 2001). Reported sexual abuse among women ranges from 25% to 77% depending on the study (Nyamathi et al., 2001; Ryan et al., 2000; Whitbeck et al., 2001). Similarly, 18-23% of males also reported experiencing childhood sexual abuse (Ryan et al., 2000; Tyler & Cauce, 2002).

Early sexual abuse leads to many detrimental outcomes for homeless youth (Banyard, Williams & Siegel, 2002; Rew, Taylor-Seehafer & Fitzgerald, 2001; Ryan et al., 2000; Simons & Whitbeck, 1991; Whitbeck et al., 2000). Street youth who have histories of sexual abuse perceive themselves to be more lonely, more depressed, less healthy and less socially connected than youth who have never experienced sexual abuse (Rew, 2002, Whitbeck et al., 2000). They also are more likely to become victimized on the street (Ryan et al., 2000; Tyler, Hoyt, Whitbeck & Cauce, 2001; Whitbeck et al., 2000). This likelihood is increased as a result of association with deviant peers, participation in deviant subsistence strategies and increased engagement in survival sex (Simons & Whitbeck, 1991; Tyler et al., 2001). Furthermore, if sexual maltreatment existed within the family, it is four times more likely that young homeless women, or men with same-sex orientation, engage in survival sex once they are on the streets (Whitbeck et al., 2001). Early sexual abuse

and later victimization appear to be connected in that childhood sexual abuse increases the likelihood that a young woman will become involved in a lifestyle that is dangerous and intensifies existing emotional distress and negative behaviors (Simons & Whitbeck, 1991; Whitbeck et al., 2000).

Lack of Attachment, Connection and Support in Families of Origin

In addition to high rates of physical and sexual abuse, homeless youth have also reported low levels of attachment to their families (Schweitzer & Hier, 1994; Stephen, 2000; Tavecchio, Stams, Brugman & Thomeer-Bouwens, 1999; Tavecchio et al., 1999). According to research done by Tavecchio et al. (1999), children who grow up in a family environment where there is insecure attachment exhibit higher rates of problem behavior and runaway more than children who grow up securely attached to their families. These children also construct a negative view of the world and of themselves. Homeless youth also report that they do not feel bonded with their parents, which is associated with low levels of care within the home (Schweitzer & Hier, 1994). Detachment can begin at an early age and results in the complete termination of relations by the age of 16 (Stephen, 2000).

Furthermore, many homeless youth do not feel connected to or supported by their families (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Bao et al., 2000; Schweitzer & Hier, 1994; Votta & Manion, 2003). Homeless women often reported feeling that they were without any close family and that they had no one they could turn to for safety or refuge (Anderson & Imle, 2001). These women lacked a feeling of connection to their families and feel abandoned by their families. Some women in Anderson & Imle's (2001) study felt like their entire family had betrayed them and believed that

members of their family had formed a coalition against them. One of the greatest concerns stated by the homeless youth in studies by Bao et al. (2000) and Schweitzer & Hier (1994) was the lack of connection that they have with their parents, as well as a lack of parental warmth, care and support. The feeling of lack of support was perceived as being the highest in the group of homeless youth who had been abused (Bao et al., 2000).

Moreover, previous studies demonstrate low levels of communication within families (Paradise et al., 2001). More than one third of street youth felt that their primary caregivers rarely talked to them about what was happening in their lives and were too busy to do anything with them (Paradise et al., 2001). Homeless youth perceive that their parents suppress their expressions of thoughts and ideas by becoming aggressive with them or disengaging from them (Blood & D'Angelo, 1974).

Finally, homeless youth reported high levels of loneliness due to the lack of care and support that they received before they left home (Rew, 2002). These feelings of loneliness were often highest at special times like birthdays or holidays. Feeling connected to friends on the street or caring for a pet helped to ease these feelings, decreased depression and helped to buffer against adverse outcomes that are often associated with the risky behaviors in which homeless youth often engage (Bao et al., 2000; Rew, 2002).

Although the majority of homeless youth leave because of problems in the home, a few studies have also found that a small, but important minority, leave as the result of overcrowding or because parents are not able to support them financially

(Stephen, 2000). In this case, homeless youth are less likely to feel detached from parents. Instead, they acknowledge that their parents will try to help them to the best of their abilities and often indicate that they would like to reside close to their parent's home (Stephen, 2000).

Social and Cultural Deprivation

Besides low levels of support and connection, street youth also perceive their families as lacking cultural and social stimulation (Blood & D'Angelo, 1974; Paradise et al., 2001; Schweitzer & Hier, 1994). Homeless youth found their family environments to provide little stimulation and they report low levels of participation in any activities outside of the school environment (Schweitzer & Hier, 1994). They claim that their families were devoid of meaningful or relevant political, cultural or intellectual activities (Schweitzer & Hier, 1994). The insufficient interaction within the family and the environment did not teach the young people the ability to engage or relate to others effectively and did not give them the opportunity to develop the necessary social skills to negotiate within society successfully (Paradise, et al., 2001; Schweitzer & Hier, 1994).

Parental Drug and Alcohol Use

Besides feeling disconnected from parents, homeless youth often grew up in homes where parents abused drugs and alcohol (Dube et al., 2003; Duncan, Duncan, Hops & Stoolmiller, 1995; Ringwalt et al., 1998; Ryan et al., 2000; Stein, Newcomb & Bentler, 1993). Moreover, previous research shows that parental substance abuse is a predictor of drug and alcohol problems for homeless youth (Baron, 1999; Smart & Adlaf, 1991; Stein et al., 2002). In addition, women who had a parent who abused

drugs were more likely to become daily drug users and women who had a parent who abused alcohol were more likely to become daily alcohol users than women whose parents did not abuse drugs or alcohol (Nyamathi et al., 2001). This finding suggests that modeling takes place within the family of origin and can have an impact on future behaviors.

Other Explanations for Youth Homelessness

Although most of the literature supports the idea that family of origin issues contribute to homelessness, there is also support for the idea that adolescent factors and behaviors can also lead to homelessness (McCaskill et al., 1998; Williams, Lindsey, Kurtz & Jarvis, 2001; Wolfe, Toro & McCaskill, 1999). The perception of having parents who are unresponsive and rejecting could be due, in part, to the behaviors exhibited by the youth, which is consistent with the concept of reciprocal interaction in human ecology theory (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). In addition, it appears as though maltreatment is the reason that many young people leave home, but it is not clear as to whether that maltreatment is the cause of their running. Instead, their running could simply be an "extension of their unregulated behaviors that possibly elicit the maltreatment" (Wolfe et al., 1999, p. 62). Furthermore, because most of the research involves self-report, the homeless youth could be exaggerating their responses to justify the reasons that they left (Wolfe et al., 1999). It is also possible that delinquent behavior was the reason that the adolescent was forced to leave (McCaskill et al., 1998). Past research has found that adolescents either leave home in order to escape abuse, family violence, or parental substance use or they leave because they do not want to obey the family rules with regards to school attendance,

curfews or drug and alcohol use (Ringwalt et al., 1998; Williams et al., 2001).

Therefore leaving home is a complicated issue that is perpetuated by family and individual factors and the interaction between these factors.

People and Factors that influence the Behaviors of Homeless Youth

Once youth become homeless, there are new people in their environments who can influence their behaviors and their quality of life. Some of these people include fictive street families, peers and service providers.

Fictive Street Families

After adolescents leave home, they can develop new families in the form of fictive street kin (McCarthy et al., 2002; Rew & Horner, 2003). Although there has been very limited research in the area of 'fictive street kin', past research has looked at fictive kin as an important component of the social networks of older people and within immigrant communities (Ebaugh & Curry, 2000; Karner, 1998; Lan, 2002; Mac Rae, 1992). Research done by McCarthy et al. (2002) explored the differences between fictive street families and other types of peer groups. They found that street families are significantly different than peer groups. Fictive street families involve roles and responsibilities that differentiate them from other relationships. Street families were more likely to involve high levels of trust, solidarity, emotional connectedness, a sense of reciprocity, a sense of security and protection. In addition, many of the homeless youth that associated with a street family said that they found parts of their family of origin that were missing within their street kin. Youth within fictive street families adopt behaviors that are consistent with identified family roles. They also use familial labels like brother, sister, mother or father to talk about their

street family and treat members of their street families differently than other friendships. Research by McCarthy et al. (2002) is supported by research done by Rew & Horner (2003) who found that youth move to the streets in order to build a new family. They consider themselves to have new brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers and do not want to return to their family of origin. Street families were relied upon for information, advice, companionship and guidance and young people considered this family to be their real family (Rew & Horner, 2003).

Peer Groups

In contrast, peer groups serve slightly different functions than fictive street families in that they do not fulfil family roles and do not always try to keep youth out of harm's way (Baron & Hartnagal, 1998, Bao et al., 2000; Kipke & Unger, 1997; McCarthy et al., 2002; Whitbeck et al., 2000). Homeless adolescents are often drawn to peers who are similar to them. Baron & Hartnagal (1998) found that violent offenders often select other violent offenders as friends because they have similar conflict styles and are in greater contact. Once these young people have entered into an alliance, they are required to participate in a variety of violent acts, especially acts that serve to defend their peers. In addition, homeless youth who have been living on the streets for extended periods of time are more likely to associate with deviant peers who victimize others and engage in coercive or aggressive acts (Bao et al., 2000; Whitbeck et al., 2001). Many of the peer relationships formed on the streets are with relative strangers and are intense and short-lived. Furthermore, the same peer network that previously offered support can also turn and victimize members within the peer group (Bao et al., 2000). Research by Kipke & Unger, (1997) also found that

peer groups influence how street youth support themselves and discourage the use of shelters for support, which can increase exposure to harm. In sum, peer groups can cause harm as well as buffer against it (Whitbeck et al., 2001).

Service Providers and Positive Role Models

One final group who can influence the behaviors and outcomes of homeless youth is service providers, community members and shelter staff (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Rew, 2002; Stephen, 2000; Tavecchio et al., 1999; Williams et al., 2001; Yancey, 1998). Youth who were considered the most resilient often formed relationships with other influential adults who were not members of their family of origin (Williams et al., 2001). These positive models were found to be effective in reaching homeless youth in situations where families of origin offered little or no support. Contact with social workers has also been found to compensate for the negative influence of the family of origin (Tavecchio et al., 1999). Furthermore, the homeless youth's perception of professional support was directly related to their well being and helped to keep the youth healthy (Rew, 2002; Stephen, 2000). Service providers are often the most consistent people in the lives of homeless youth and can serve as good role models for pro-social behavior (Yancey, 1998). In addition, having community members interact with homeless youth provided them with positive role models, which was a protective factor for the street youth (Williams et al., 2001; Yancey, 1998). If there are no positive relationships within the young person's family of origin, these role models can help the homeless youth learn how to build positive relationships (Anderson & Imle, 2001).

The Importance of Studying Homelessness and Planning Interventions

There are many future directions that could be taken in order to understand youth homelessness more completely. Research relating to the parents' view of their child's homelessness is an area that could be developed further because it is an area that lacks study and could offer important insight into the family dynamics that contribute to youth homelessness. In addition it would be beneficial to look at how the family is affected once the child leaves home. Issues around resiliency and the factors relating to leaving the streets could also be further explored.

Although the literature raises many areas that warrant additional research, it also calls for the establishment of intervention programs based on research to help those young people who are already living on the streets (Tavecchio et al., 1999; Thompson, Safyer & Pollio, 2001; Tyler & Cauce, 2002; Votta & Manion, 2003). These programs could include education, family interventions, relationship development, provision of safe and affordable housing, job skills training, positive role modeling and many others (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Rew & Horner, 2003; Thompson et al., 2001; Whitbeck et al., 2000). Interventions should focus on promoting healthy independence, developing effective coping skills, fostering engagement skills, building support and violence prevention because these are skills that were not often taught in the home and are necessary in negotiating life on and off of the streets (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Bao et al., 2000; Rew & Horner, 2003; Thompson et al., 2001; Votta & Manion, 2003).

According to Kipke & Unger (1997), planning an intervention that would prevent youth from becoming completely integrated in the culture of the street by

linking them with non-street peers and services is of utmost importance. This linkage could encourage pro-social behaviors and allow the homeless youth to develop relationships that foster support, guidance and protection as they navigate street life (Kipke & Unger, 1997; Rew & Horner, 2003). As homeless youth have often come from families where there were no positive relationships, it is imperative to assist them in learning how to build successful relationships (Anderson & Imle, 2001). Furthermore, intervention strategies should take into account that homeless youth are not a homogenous group and that there is a need to address their issues on an individual basis (McCaskill et al., 1998). For example, previous research has pointed to the need for unique services that involve culturally sensitive program content for minority populations (Thompson et al., 2001). By designing a program that facilitates positive attachments outside of the family and street peer group, homeless youth will gain valuable skills that will help them to facilitate positive changes that will increase their quality of life (Bronstein, 1996; Kipke & Unger, 1997; Williams et al, 2001).

The literature also calls for a focus on homeless youths' inner strengths and the use of existing resources that can help them to increase health promoting behaviors (Bao et al., 2000; Bronstein, 1996; Rew & Horner, 2003). Concentrating on strengths, such as successfully living in a difficult street environment, strong internal motivation for self-improvement and survival and extensive knowledge of the environment, can help motivate homeless youth to change (Rew & Horner, 2003). Furthermore, peer support networks or fictive street kin should be considered valuable in terms of being a resource that can help young people to cope with life on

the street (Bao et al., 2000). By focusing on strengths, the cultural competence of the homeless youth is affirmed and they are able to see "what's possible in an otherwise grim situation" (Bronstein, 1996, p. 133).

Although the literature encourages program implementation, it also recognizes that this population can be difficult to engage (Kipke & Unger, 1997; Tavecchio et al., 1999; Tyler & Cauce, 2002). Tavecchio et al. (1999) state:

It appears that by providing specific and timely support, it may be possible to break the downward spiral which threatens to entrap affectively neglected young people, making them increasingly incapable of assuring themselves of supportive social networks which can compensate for the role of the parents (p. 260).

This need for early intervention in order to break the cycle is supported by other research (Kipke & Unger, 1997; Tyler & Cauce, 2002; Whitbeck et al., 2000). Kipke & Unger (1997) also found that it may be necessary to implement different types of interventions, including recreational activities, street outreach, case management and drop-in services, in order to target the young people who have become fully integrated into the street culture and do not want to engage with others.

The adversity that homeless youth must overcome is great. Without a holistic, human ecological approach that addresses family of origin issues, current needs within the environment and future directions, the cycle of homelessness will continue to be perpetuated. Interventions must be developed in order to assist street youth in gaining the skills necessary to negotiate successfully within today's society. With the

combination of effective program planning and the inner strengths of the homeless youth, positive outcomes can and will occur.

In order to address the call from the literature for the establishment of effective intervention programs that take into account the family of origin issues of homeless youth and their present situations, a supportive relationship program will be designed based on input from key stakeholders. In following with the grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis, I will review relevant literature to program design based on data collected during interviews and focus groups (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Chapter III – Research Method

Qualitative Research: A Brief Introduction

Qualitative research is a broad term used to describe a complex set of methodologies that move towards understanding social phenomenon more completely. Researchers who engage in qualitative research attempt to understand the meaning of an occurrence instead of describing its frequency (Van Maanen, 1983). Qualitative research takes place in the natural setting where researchers gather data that may include both written words and pictures (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The focus of this type of research is on describing phenomena in a holistic manner using multiple methods of inquiry that provide emergent and detailed findings (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Using methods that are both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the research is taking place is also key in qualitative research (Mason, 1999). When conducting this type of research, researchers must systematically reflect on their experience. Personal experiences are seen as key events that can be both informative and analyzed as relevant data in qualitative research (Van Maanen, 1983). Creswell (1998) likens qualitative research to “an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, many textures, and various blends of material” (p. 18). This material cannot be explained in a simple or easy manner. This metaphor helps to explain the complex, intricate and ultimately rewarding challenge of using qualitative research as a mode of inquiry.

Using qualitative research as a basis for program development is appropriate because it offers the researcher the ability to obtain in-depth and detailed information about stakeholders needs, wants and strengths. Participants have the opportunity to

articulate their ideas and contribute to program design as they engage in dialogue with the researcher. This dialogue allows room for clarification of ideas and involves a flexible line of questioning in order to gain insight and understanding. For these reasons, qualitative research is ideal for program development.

Constraints Around this Research

Certain constraints exist in this study because it is one part of a larger project (Munro et al., 2003). Before I commenced work on this project, the academic investigators of the larger project had already decided that a program, which involves supportive relationships between university students and homeless youth, would be developed. This decision was based on personal experiences and previous work done by members of the research team and included a preliminary review of the literature. After completing the literature review for my study, the need for the implementation of a program that meets the needs of stakeholders was confirmed, which supported previous decisions made by the research team. Although there were constraints in terms of the type of program, there was still flexibility to change the direction of program development should the data not support a mentorship program.

Prior to commencing the development phase of this research, the use of participatory action research (PAR) as a methodology was considered, but was not feasible due to existing constraints. For example, there was only partial involvement from the community in the preliminary stages of the research and the research team, with limited community input, made many of the decisions for the direction of this research. However, key concepts from PAR were drawn upon. First of all, service providers, students and homeless youth played an active role in the program design

and helped to shape the program through their input at interviews and during informal meetings. Second, the researcher engaged in active listening and sought clarification of participant's ideas to ensure that the program design reflects the ideas of stakeholders. Finally, the researcher gave the participants the opportunity to suggest modifications to the program once it was designed. Although PAR will not be carried out in full, the research was conducted in a manner that is community-based and driven by the stakeholders.

Data Collection and Analysis: The Grounded Theory Approach

Grounded theory is a set of procedures that combines data collection and analysis in order to develop theory (Charmaz, 2001). This method of analysis emerged from work done by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960's and provides researchers with a clear set of guidelines to be used when conducting research (Charmaz, 2001; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory has become an important method because of its unique approach to data collection and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It begins with an area of study and works towards building a relevant theory that reflects the actual worlds of the participants (Charmaz, 2001). Grounded theory provides the researcher with the means to understand the data in a systematic way while simultaneously keeping the theory grounded in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Although this study did not involve theory building, it did draw on the concepts from the grounded theory approach to design a program. Just as theory is derived in a systematic way, grounded in the data, so was program design.

Sampling

In order to employ the grounded theory approach, decisions about data collection methods and sampling techniques must be made prior to commencing research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Purposeful Sampling

In following with the method, the researcher first selects participants based on purposeful sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), which means that potential participants are knowledgeable about the topic, experienced, articulate and willing to participate (Morse, 1991). It is essential to select informants carefully prior to conducting interviews to ensure that the sample meets the criteria for adequacy and appropriateness and that participants have expert knowledge on the phenomenon under study (Chiang, Keatinge & Williams, 2001; Morse, 1991; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In order to design the program, three groups were selected based on purposeful sampling. These groups included service providers at Cunningham Place, university students at the University of Alberta and homeless youth in Edmonton. They were selected based on their ability to be key informants in designing a program that links homeless youth with university students.

(1) Service Providers.

Three interviews were initially conducted with service providers at Cunningham Place. In order to be selected, service providers met the following criteria:

- 1) Were 18 years of age or older.

- 2) Were actively involved in providing services for homeless youth at Cunningham Place.

- 3) Agreed to be audio taped.

This group was selected based on their knowledge and expertise in working with homeless youth through the services that they provide at Cunningham Place.

Furthermore, service providers will be involved with the implementation of the program, so it is imperative that the program is relevant to them and meets their needs. Service providers were recruited by asking them directly if they would like to participate in the study. Because the researcher is not in a position of power within Cunningham Place, it is not likely that potential participants felt pressured to participate. After they consented to participate, a time and a comfortable meeting place were arranged.

(2) University Students.

Three focus groups were conducted with university students. Two focus groups had four participants and one focus group had five students. Inclusion criteria for students included:

- 1) Were 18 years of age or older.
- 2) Were third or fourth-year undergraduate or graduate students in the departments of Human Ecology, Native Studies or Health Promotion.
- 3) A strong concentration of courses in areas of health, wellness, family, relational counselling, social issues, Aboriginal culture or community functioning.
- 4) Strong communication skills.

- 5) Agreed to be audio taped.

Students who met these criteria have a knowledge base of community issues and programs to draw from, which allowed them to provide in-depth responses. In addition, senior-level undergraduate and graduate students have both the personal and educational experience to strengthen the quality of the data collected.

Recruitment of university students took place through in-class presentations by the researcher. Students were requested to participate in the study at that time and a discussion about time and location for the focus group sessions took place after class.

(3) Homeless Youth.

Two focus groups were conducted with homeless youth. One focus group had ten participants and the other had five. In order to be included in the study, homeless youth met the following criteria:

- 1) Were between the ages of 18 and 29.
- 2) Were absolutely homeless (living on the streets), living in shelters or living in transitional housing.
- 3) Agreed to be audio taped.

As homeless youth have many experiences associated with homelessness, their insights were invaluable. Homeless youth were recruited through Cunningham Place. In order to prevent coercion, they were asked directly by the researcher if they would like to participate in the project instead of being recruited through staff at Cunningham Place. A time and location was discussed with the youth once they agreed to participate.

Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling involves selectively recruiting informants based on data collection in order to "gather data that will maximize opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties and dimensions" (Mellion & Tovin, 2002, p. 112). Theoretical sampling is done simultaneously with data analysis in that the analysis helps to decide what subsequent data need to be collected in order to develop theory as it emerges from the data (Cutcliffe, 2000; Mellion & Tovin, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Theoretical sampling took place after initial interviews and focus groups were completed and analyzed. Two additional interviews were conducted with service providers in order to ensure that adequate data were collected. No additional focus groups were conducted with either students or homeless youth.

Saturation

Sampling continued until nothing new was being said that would help to inform the program design. According to Strauss & Corbin (1998), saturation is the point at which collecting further data seems counterproductive because the new information does not add anything significant to the research or the researcher runs out of time and or money. Saturation is always a matter of degree; there is always the potential for new directions and data to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Therefore, the researcher must make an informed decision about saturation based on richness of data and stakeholder support.

Data Collection

As with participatory action research, data can come from many sources when using grounded theory as a method of analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). In order to develop a program that links university students with homeless youth, one main method of data collection was used. This method included in-depth interviews, in individual and focus group formats. The decision to use this method of data collection was based on the nature of the research question and the aims of the study, which required in-depth responses to questions around program design (McCann & Clark, 2003). By utilizing this method, rich data for analysis were obtained.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Face-to-face individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with service providers from Cunningham Place. Individual interviews serve to enhance the quality of the data collected because they ensure not only that the appropriate person has completed the interview, but also allow the researcher to clarify any confusion or to ask for further information from respondents during the actual interview (Palys, 1997). Furthermore, interviews allow the participants to express their unique perspectives and to lead the interviewer in new directions based on their knowledge and expertise. Finally, individual interviews allow for greater response depth and detail than other data collection methods (Palys, 1997). Although face-to-face interviews have many advantages, they do require a significant amount of time to be completed and can be costly, which could be seen as disadvantages (Palys, 1997).

I decided to use individual interviews with service providers for a number of reasons. First, there is a small number of staff to draw from and after talking with the

coordinator at Cunningham Place, it was apparent that it was not practical to have the service providers meet as a group due to scheduling difficulties. The small number of staff also meant that it was feasible to conduct individual interviews with anyone who wanted to participate without being too time consuming. Also, using individual interviews allowed service providers to offer in-depth responses around program design, to give their perspectives about how the program should look and what components are necessary for a successful program. All service providers at Cunningham Place were asked to participate and five service providers agreed. The researcher and the participant established the location for the interview. Interviews took place at Cunningham Place in a location that was comfortable for the service provider and where other staff could not hear the interview.

Focus groups interviews were held with University of Alberta students and homeless youth in Edmonton. A typical focus group has between seven and twelve participants and lasts for approximately one to one and a half hours (Kleiber, 2004). Participants in focus groups are generally selected based on common characteristics in order to acquire new insights about the phenomenon under study (Palys, 1997). The social nature of focus groups is advantageous in that it allows a range of opinions to surface and a negotiation of perspectives to take place between participants (Palys, 1997). Furthermore, focus groups provide rich data that include participant attitudes, opinions and beliefs and allows ideas to build as the people interact and try to explain why they responded the way that they did (Kleiber, 2004).

Although focus groups provide new insights, there are also several complications that can result because of the group setting. First of all, group

participation can vary and shy participants may not feel comfortable voicing their opinions in a public setting (Palys, 1997). Also, respondents who hold unique or extreme views may not express their actual views due to the chance that other group members may ridicule them. Finally, responses may be less honest than in individual interviews because participants may be concerned about their image in the group setting (Palys, 1997).

The reasons for using focus group interviews with university students are twofold. First, it is much easier to hold a focus group immediately before or after a class so that participating in the study is convenient and students do not have to make an additional trip to campus for an interview. Second, I felt that the nature of focus groups would provide the richest data in a feasible amount of time due to the potential for a large number of students wanting to participate. Student focus groups took place in the focus group room at the Human Ecology Building on the University of Alberta campus.

Focus group interviews were also used as the data collection method for homeless youth. Previous experience of the researcher with homeless youth indicated that youth were more comfortable and seemed less intimidated when they were talking in a group setting, rather than in an individual interview. Focus group sessions with homeless youth took place in a secure meeting room in Cunningham Place away from the offices of staff members.

Although several of the focus groups had less than the recommended number of participants, due to some difficulty in recruiting participants, the data collected were rich and saturation was reached. Each interview and focus group took between

one and two hours. Interviews and focus group sessions followed a semi-structured interview format (Appendix A) and probes were used to clarify information and to elaborate on important topics. All interviews were conducted by myself and another graduate student who is also a member of the research team. We both asked probing questions and took notes during the interviews. All interviews and focus groups were audio taped and tapes were transcribed and analyzed for themes.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are vital in conducting good research. In this study, issues around confidentiality, informed consent and recruitment were addressed in order to protect participants. In addition, I remained flexible and sensitive to all participants' needs. I also engaged in reflexivity and ethical practices around research, which enabled informants to participate openly in order to help design a program with little personal risk. Participants benefited from the research in that they had an opportunity to share their ideas and suggestions around appropriate design and helped to formulate a program that reflects of the needs of service providers, students and homeless youth.

Informed Consent

Prior to commencing data collection, the researcher ensured that informed consent was obtained. An information sheet containing detailed information about the study was given to all participants (Appendix B). They were also given a written consent form to sign once they had read the information sheet and had a chance to ask questions or seek clarification (Appendix C). Consent forms specified the risks of the study, a description of how the data will be used, a request for permission to use the

data for secondary analysis and issues around confidentiality. After the participants had read, filled out and signed the consent form, the interview or focus group began.

Confidentiality

Measures have been taken to ensure that the information provided and the researcher will protect the identity of participants. Participants were made aware of these measures during the informed consent process. Participants were informed that any information collected will include only a number code and that their name will not be used. Information will be stored in a locked, secure location that only the investigators have access to. All information will be kept for five years and then destroyed. Agencies may be named in reports and papers about the study with the consent of the CEO and participants were made aware that although all information will be kept confidential, anonymity cannot be ensured as quotes may be recognized. This is especially relevant to service providers. Also, researchers cannot ensure that focus group participants keep information provided during interviews confidential. In order to address this issue, the importance of confidentiality was discussed before focus groups commenced. Participants were informed that they could choose not to respond to any question and that they could end the interview or cease to participate in a focus group at any time without consequence.

Once data were analyzed and a tentative program was designed, participants had the opportunity to comment on the program and to suggest possible modifications. This was done on an individual basis for service providers and students and in a small group for homeless youth. All identifiers were removed from

the program design to ensure confidentiality was maintained. After participants had a chance to make suggestions, a final version of the program was developed.

Data Analysis

Consistent with a grounded theory approach, data collection and analysis ran simultaneously in a systematic manner through a variety of procedures and techniques (Mellion & Tovin, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Verbatim transcription of tapes and analysis of information collected occurred immediately following interviews and focus groups. All coding was done by hand. Coding by hand "enables greater visualization of the data than through the use of qualitative software" (McCann & Clark, 2003, p. 35) and therefore was the primary method of analysis. According to Strauss & Corbin, (1998) grounded theory relies on a systematic method to data analysis and includes open, axial and selective coding, as well as the application of the constant comparison method. Although there are separate types of coding, the process is cyclical and fluid in that it can shift from open to axial and then to selective coding (McCann & Clark, 2003).

Open Coding

Initial coding began with a line-by-line analysis of all pertinent or interesting information from the transcribed interviews or focus groups, which assisted with program design (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This process involved breaking down the data into discrete parts that were categorized as analysis continued (McCann & Clark, 2003). For example, the following descriptions were grouped under the code "moving from a group setting to one-on-one".

"I wouldn't suggest that you do a one-on-one until you get to know each other a bit. You might start off in groups."

"A good way to start things off too is in a group because then there's no pressure to keep this two person conversation going..."

Line-by-line coding forced me to concentrate on the written data and ensured that preconceived beliefs about the area of interest did not influence the actual analysis (Charmaz, 1990). As codes were identified, I recorded a short description of the occurrence and continued the process by checking the rest of the text for all possible instances of new codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In following with the constant comparison method, all codes were repeatedly compared within and between each other until the basic properties of a category were defined (Mellion & Tovin, 2002). Throughout open coding, codes were fine-tuned in order to ensure that they accurately reflected the data (Mellion & Tovin, 2002). Open coding depicts the "process in which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in the data" (Mellion & Tovin, 2002, p. 113).

Once codes and concepts began to accrue, I started grouping the codes into more abstract and explanatory terms called categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For example, I combined the codes "moving from a group setting to one-on-one", "need for flexibility" and "time commitment" into one category called "structure". These categories illustrate the most important concepts and issues in the study. These categories were then developed in terms of their different dimensions and properties, which also led to the production of sub-categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Axial Coding

Axial coding continued the processes that began in open coding as I related categories to sub-categories and linked categories together (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Included within axial coding is the use of the paradigm models, which is an

organizational scheme that helps to establish relationships between the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). According to Strauss & Corbin (1998), this paradigm need not be applied rigidly but instead helps with the identification of a phenomenon, its conditions, actions and interactions as well as its consequences. I used a web diagram to link categories and create sub-categories. For example, I took the category "structure" and made it into a sub-category of "necessary program components". I also included "goals & objectives", "program activities" and "training" as other sub-categories under the "necessary program components" umbrella. Overall, axial coding is different than open coding in that it aims to classify concepts by grouping or clustering concepts together into abstract categories (McCann & Clark, 2003).

Selective Coding

The final component of Strauss & Corbin's (1998) grounded theory method is selective coding. The goal of selective coding is to identify a core or overarching category (Charmaz, 1990). The core category is expansive in range and helps to integrate and explain the relationship between other categories that emerged from the data (McCann & Clark, 2003). This category can only begin to emerge "after constant comparative analysis with the data, persistent questioning and painstaking analytical thinking" (McCann & Clark, 2003, p. 14). It is a process by which the analyst aims to put the data back into a meaningful whole (McCann & Clark, 2003). Theory is integrated and refined by reviewing for internal consistency, finding gaps within the logic, eliminating poorly defined categories and supplementing categories that do little to contribute to the theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Inherent in theory building is the concept of validation. By returning to the raw data or to the

participants in the study, theory can be validated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The continuation of theory development occurs over the entire course of the analysis and is on going throughout the process. In this study the key purpose was to develop a program. Therefore, the general concepts of theory building in a grounded theory approach will be used to design a program, rather than to build a theory.

Memo Writing and Diagrams

Memo writing is one technique that can be used to aid in the formulation and revision of theory and is considered a vital part of analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). It is a process that takes place throughout the research and allows reflection on the internal dialogue of the researcher as she or he interacts with the data (McCann & Clark, 2003). Memos can be used to free associate, to unblock, to integrate and to aid in conceptualization during analysis (Orona, 1990). Writing memos allows the analyst an outlet to say whatever she or he wants about the data (Orona, 1990). It provides the researcher with a means to analyze and question aspects of the research process and to uncover preconceptions about the data that are often taken for granted (Charmaz, 1990). The use of diagrams is another important aspect of analysis. They help to represent relationships among concepts in a visual manner (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). If a researcher is unable to depict the conceptualizations being developed in a graphical manner, it is a good indicator that the analyst is not genuinely clear of the process and points to the need to continue with analysis (Orona, 1990). Memo writing and diagrams are critical aspects of analysis in that a great deal of conceptual detail can be lost if memos and diagrams are omitted (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Both

memos and diagrams were used in this study and became part of the data because they represent the linkages that I made as I engaged in the research process.

Reflexivity

As qualitative methods invariably involve interaction among the researcher, participants and the data, reflexivity is vital in keeping the analysis grounded in the data (Cutcliffe, 2000). According to Lipson (1991), reflexivity refers to the idea that the researcher is a part of the data and that the researcher's thoughts and feelings affect the research process. As reality is constructed, by the researcher and the participants, from a shared perspective, it is important for the researcher to document his/her own thoughts, feelings and decision-making processes throughout data collection and analysis (Mellion & Tovin, 2002). It is also essential that the researcher is aware of his/her personal preconceptions, values and beliefs throughout the process. This was done through a reflexive journal that examined and clarified the researcher's biases and through memo writing (Mellion & Tovin, 2002). Reflexivity is an important process that allowed the analyst to 'write themselves' into the research and became part of the data collected.

Rigour in Qualitative Research

Making sure that a study is conducted in a rigorous manner is important when employing research methods. Four criteria of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were developed by Lincoln and Guba (1986) to ensure rigour, without relinquishing the relevance of qualitative research. Several strategies for assessing these criteria are included in this study and are discussed in the following section.

Credibility

In order to be considered credible, a qualitative study must accurately describe the perceived realities of participants (Sandelowski, 1986). The 'truth value' in a study is "contained within the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by informants" (Krefting, 1991).

Several strategies were employed to increase credibility within this study.

First, I used purposeful sampling to ensure that all respondents were able to provide rich data that would enable me to design a program that meets the needs of all participants. Secondly, all individual and focus group interviews were audiotaped and transcribed to ensure that I had an accurate record of what respondents said during interviews. In addition, I examined responses that did not seem to fit and considered all participant responses to be valuable input into program design. When participants did not think that a mentorship program was completely suitable, I proceeded by asking them what they thought would be helpful and of interest to them. Finally, I used member checks as a way to test my interpretation of the data and subsequent program design. These checks were done individually or in a small group with participants, either in person or via email, where a number of participants looked over the proposed program and offered their comments and suggestions about the extent to which the program is relevant to them and addresses their needs.

Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which results from a study can be applied to other contexts. This criterion is met when findings are relevant to settings and people that are outside of the study situation. This is determined by the goodness of fit or

degree of similarity between the two samples (Krefting, 1991). Although transferability is not the intention of this project, I used thick description of the data so that others who wish to apply the findings can make judgments about the degree to which the findings will fit in their settings and with their samples (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Dependability

When conducting qualitative research, dependability refers to the degree to which comparable results would be found if the study was replicated by another researcher under similar circumstances and conditions (Sandelowski, 1986). Increasing dependability in this project involved ensuring that another researcher could clearly follow my decisions and audit trail. My audit trail included recorded information around decision-making procedures as well as methods that were used for data gathering, analysis and interpretation (Krefting, 1991). By clearly establishing how I conducted the study, others should be able to track the process and the program development. In addition, my supervisor read the transcripts from my interviews and offered suggestions and guidance to improve my research.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the criterion of neutrality in qualitative research. It relates to data and interpretational confirmability instead of researcher objectivity (Krefting, 1992; Sandelowski, 1986). Meeting this criterion involved reflexive analysis to ensure that personal biases were addressed and that I was aware of my influence in the data collection and analysis processes. I kept a field journal that included logistical information as well as personal thoughts, feelings and ideas about the

interviews. It also contained problems that arose during the research process, including my questions and frustrations. By writing down feelings and thoughts, I became more aware of personal biases and assumptions that could influence the research findings. I referred to the journal as I was creating categories and sub-categories to ensure that the research findings were supported by the data and not based on my personal assumptions or expectations. For example, one of my biases from the beginning of this project was my belief that the key stakeholders would appreciate the development of a new program and that they would be interested in this type of program. This bias became apparent to me after I felt uncomfortable when the research team discussed what our next step would be if there was no support for the program. Because I was aware that I wanted the stakeholders to be interested, I was careful not to read into the data and focused on what the respondents had actually said. Although the respondents did support the program, I believe that I would have accepted a lack of support for the program had it been present. By including reflexivity in the research process, I increased the likelihood that the realities of the participants informed the process and not my personal history (Krefting, 1991).

Furthermore, one of the other research assistants and I each analyzed the data separately and then came together to discuss the categories that seemed to emerge from the data. This allowed us to see our similarities as well as our differences and to reach a consensus about program design. In addition, the members of the research team, who are experienced in qualitative methods, including my thesis supervisor, were also involved in this study, which enhanced the confirmability of findings.

Several meetings were held to discuss the data and to work towards a program design that was based on the data. A conscious effort was made to keep the program design based on the data collected and not on personal assumptions.

Conclusion

Developing a program that will meet the needs of service providers, university students and homeless youth alike was achieved through the use of grounded theory. The systematic and rigorous approach to sampling, data collection and analysis provided a valuable framework from which a program could be designed. Through careful analysis and constant reflexivity, grounded theory is a useful method that allows an in-depth picture of the phenomenon under study.

Chapter IV - Findings

The following chapter presents findings acquired through individual and focus group interviews with service providers, students and homeless youth. Through open-ended interview questions, participants were able to share their ideas with regards to various aspects of program design. These findings will be the foundation in designing a program that links homeless youth and university students in a supportive relationship. This information has been supplemented with both the investigator's personal notes and conversations with other member's of the research team.

The research team was a valuable asset to program design. Once data had been collected and analyzed, the research team provided feedback and helped to shape the program. Although not included as a separate section, the discussions held with the research team gave me the opportunity to talk about my thoughts regarding the program design. Their prior experiences and expertise in program development were important as they offered suggestions and helped me to clarify my thoughts. Although the program has been designed based primarily on ideas of the interview respondents, the research team also assisted in developing the program.

Findings from the research will be broken into several sections. The first section will look at the information gathered from service providers. In this section, four central categories with several sub-categories emerged and will be discussed in detail with the use of quotes to illustrate and support each category. Secondly, findings from focus groups with university students will be explored. Finally, data from homeless youth focus groups will be examined.

Of the four central categories, the first category that will be discussed in each section is limited experience. This category emerged as a result of comments from respondents with regard to the fact that most students have had limited experience with homeless youth and vice versa. Although they have limited experience, the respondents also indicated that this program would provide an opportunity for program participants to broaden their perspectives and to learn more about each other. Broadening perspective's, a sub-category of limited experience, involves having a better understanding of the realities of either being a student or a homeless youth. It also entails decreasing judgement and negative stereotypes. Ultimately, this sub-category focuses on moving away from narrow ideas with regards to one another and to see each other as individuals. In addition, the students and the homeless youth also expressed some hesitation and uncertainty about pairing the two groups due to their vast differences in experience. This sub-category did not emerge from the service provider results, so it was only included in the student and homeless youth result sections. Finally, all three groups supported the overall program idea, in that they felt that this program would help to expand on the limited experience of both the students and the homeless youth.

The second category that will be discussed is reciprocal relationships. This category was developed based on data that pointed to the need for this program to involve shared experiences and mutual relationships between program participants. In order to create this experience, respondents discussed the need for this program to involve a cultural or mutual exchange between program participants so that students and homeless youth benefit from the encounter. Although the respondents stressed

that the basis of the program needs to be mutual exchange, they also felt that the roles could vary slightly between students, homeless youth and service providers based on their expertise. Therefore, the roles emerged as separate sub-categories.

Furthermore, barriers to the formation of these relationships are discussed. Finally, the result sections for both service providers and homeless youth also contain a sub-category that focuses on the basis of successful relationship formation. This sub-category did not emerge in the student focus groups and therefore was not included in the student result section.

The third main category that emerged from the data is necessary program components. This category involves the nuts and bolts of the program. It includes a discussion on goals and objectives, possible program activities, overall program structure and training. This section provides an overview of the components that are necessary for the successful implementation of this program.

Finally, safety will be discussed. Although safety could be seen as a sub-category of necessary program components or training, I felt that it should be a separate category based on the importance that respondents placed on the need to ensure the safety of all program participants. This category includes potential boundary issues, other potential safety issues and ways to maintain personal safety during the program. In addition, the students also articulated the importance of having a mediator in place to solve challenges as they arise. This sub-category did not emerge as a separate category for the service providers and therefore was not included for all three groups.

Service Provider Results

This section will examine information gathered from service providers. Five out of seven possible service providers were interviewed for this study. Of the two service providers who were not interviewed, one chose not to participate due to time constraints and the other was willing to participate if we needed additional information. All of the service providers who work at Cunningham Place are female and therefore all respondents were female. Two of the respondents are program facilitators and have experience in developing and facilitating programming for homeless youth. Two respondents were caseworkers who had experience with working with youth both at Cunningham Place and as outreach workers on the streets. The other respondent was an assistant to the program manager who also works the evening shift where she has a lot of contact with the youth who live at Cunningham Place. Information has been broken down into categories that will be discussed in detail in the following segment.

Category: Limited Experience

(1) Sub-category: Broadening Perspectives.

Although service providers did not speak as extensively about broadening perspectives as the homeless youth and the students, this theme did emerge through other categories, such as training, goals and objectives and the student's role. Service providers did see a better understanding of homeless people as an overall objective of the program and supported broadening perspectives as a whole.

(2) Sub-category: Support for the Overall Program Idea.

Service providers were very supportive of the program idea for a linkage between university students and homeless youth. They were excited by the prospect of this type of program and felt that some type of mentorship program is needed.

"I'm excited about the idea that you're doing this. I think it's really awesome. I can see some real benefits and I've often thought that we need a mentorship program." (Interview 1, p. 17)

In addition, one of the service providers thought that getting the community involved with this population could help them to make huge changes. She talked about community in terms of the larger community, outside of those who are normally in contact with the homeless population. She explained, "It's all about the community. Like if the community gets together and works together, um, you can make huge changes, I think. It's really exciting." (Interview 1, p. 17) Finally, another service provider thought that the program would benefit homeless youth by offering caring support.

"I think it's gonna be beneficial and helpful to not only Cunningham but to the clientele of the HomeWard and the homeless. Just know that there are...people who do care and people who want to help the homeless." (Interview 4, p. 10)

Category: Reciprocal Relationships

(1) Sub-category: Cultural/Mutual Exchange.

The service providers also felt that this program should involve a mutual exchange between program participants. The service providers all talked about how they learn from the homeless youth on a daily basis. They also believed that the students who become involved in this program will learn from the youth.

"Learn lots from each other. I know in here like I learn everyday from the students. It's amazing, like it's really truly a privilege to learn what I learn from them." (referring to homeless youth who students in one of their programs) (Interview 3, p.5)

"Oh it would be reciprocal, totally and lots of time I feel that I get more um from being involved with them than they do." (Interview 1, p. 5)

Furthermore, service providers thought that this program could offer students a chance to gain a better understanding of the realities of homelessness, while being exposed to people with different experiences than their own. As one service provider explained, "Different experiences. Different types of friendships, different types of relationships, different types of views, values, morals, all that stuff, yeah" (Interview 5, p. 2).

Service providers emphasized the need for students to see themselves as equal to the homeless youth. One respondent stated, "Being equal. Not better than. Being equal." (Interview 3/4, p. 15) In order to foster this exchange, several of the service providers suggested that the program start in the homeless youths' environment. This way, youth and students can spend time getting to know one another and establishing rapport. Once the youth feel comfortable with the students, the service providers thought that the program should expand to include different environments and new activities for the program participants.

"I think initially that would be a good start, to spend time down here, [2 - Okay.] yep. Just to get a feel of the culture, to have an understanding of um what that person's life is like and then moving out from there. Like doing activities, going out from there, getting a comfort level doing other things." (Interview 1, p. 3)

The service providers saw focusing on the mutual exchange between the students and the homeless youth as an important component of the program.

(2) Sub-category: Student Role.

Service providers thought that one of the main roles that students should take in this program is to provide support and encouragement to the homeless youth. They explained that homeless youth often lack family and close friends, so having someone there to support them is very important.

"I believe that our tenants here, they do need, a lot of them don't have family, a lot of them don't have a lot of close friends so just so just, you know even knowing that there's somebody else there that cares about them, that's, that's sometimes just even enough you know." (Interview 2, p. 4)

In addition, service providers felt that students need to have a lot of patience and understanding when supporting homeless youth. One respondent explained, "In a lot of cases you know they're not gonna do what you're gonna hope they do and, and it's very disappointing sometimes but you have to just give them that, that encouragement and get them back up there to try it again." (Interview 2, p. 7)

Furthermore, several service providers talked about the need for students to support and encourage the youth to find their own way.

"To be understanding of them and not to give up, not to give up on them. And to have that understanding, that strength within oneself that okay you know that person needs the help so I'm going to encourage this person, I'm gonna push this person but not push them away. Push this person because you know that person can do it." (Interview 4, p. 6)

"Just to be there and to give them that moral support that they may need, but not to carry them. You know, maybe to assist them at first, in the beginning and just let them know that we're here for you." (Interview 4, p. 2)

Overall, service providers felt that students could take on the role of supporter within this program to help the youth to build their confidence.

Service providers also thought that students could model healthy behaviors and share their own experiences with the youth. Several respondents talked about the

role of students as "being a role model to the homeless youth" (Interview 3/4, p. 16) or someone who is "like a mentor." (Interview 5, p. 6) Furthermore, several service providers thought that students should also take the role of sharing openly with the homeless youth so that the youth can see the similarities between themselves and students.

"I think sharing, like just really being open and sharing who you are or who the student is and that helps them realize that they're not really any different. It's just the experiences have been different. Um, you know that you also have challenges and barriers." (Interview 3, p. 4)

Finally, the service providers saw the role for students as being a group who can engage in activities with the homeless youth, as well as help them to organize program activities.

"You know getting involved in things that are healthy and um, when we talked about it, um with some of the clients here, they were really interested in that, they wanted to get something going and so I could see students really fostering that kind of a thing, like getting some like basketball, getting them out to the gym. Things like that would, they would really enjoy." (Interview 1, p. 4)

Additionally, a couple of the service providers felt that the students could also help to organize fundraising events for the program or for recreational equipment for Cunningham Place. Past fundraising attempts at Cunningham Place did not get off of the ground because of lack of organization. One respondent explained, "At one time the participants here or the people who were living here at Cunningham Place wanted to raise some money for recreational equipment and they had some excellent ideas. They wanted to ah have a car wash, but that never got off the ground because staff was too overworked to kind of get behind them on it. So if students were involved in that and really helped them organize those kinds of things, they'd have a bawl. They

really would enjoy it and they'd get something out of it in the end." (Interview 1, p. 9)

The service providers saw the students as being able to take part in and organize the program activities.

In order to fulfill their roles, the service providers felt that students need to have certain qualities. First of all, they felt that students need to be open-minded, respectful and non-judgmental. Furthermore, they also thought that the students need to have qualities such as patience, compassion and understanding. Finally, the service providers also thought that the students need to be able to treat the youth as equals.

"An open mind. A willingness to um, be patient, you know, be patient with them." (Interview 4, p.2)

"An understanding, maybe compassion, non-judgmental and then when I say equality, like be equal." (Interview 4, p. 2)

(3) Sub-category: Homeless Youth Role.

Service providers thought that the homeless youth could take the role of teacher in this program. They talked about how the youth can teach the students about the realities of their lives through sharing their stories. The service providers all thought that students would be changed through their experiences with the homeless youth.

"Your world will never be the same after you work with these people. They have um, tremendous strength, tremendous courage, tremendous spirit, um sometimes to survive the things that they have survived. Um, it's and when they start to move because of something, the support that you've offered, it just opens up, you feel really good about what you've done so I, I just think they're tremendous teachers." (Interview 1, p. 5)

Furthermore, the service providers also thought that the homeless youth could teach the students about things like resiliency, courage, strength, uniqueness and truth. One

respondent explained, "Uniqueness and different insight. 'Cause I know that's what I get from them, you know, just they all have something different to give and they have, one may have a good sense of humor that they can really share, they like to share humor, just being able to share that with somebody else. A lot of them have a lot that they want to share and they want to give." (Interview 5, p. 6-7) Another service provider said, "I think that they have so much to teach us about resiliency." (Interview 3, p. 5) Finally, another service provider responded, "The first thing that came to my mind was truth...you know how it is out there. How they live." (Interview 4, p. 4) According to the service providers, the youth will become tremendous teachers for the students by "sharing [themselves] and their struggles. You know really trying to orientate what it's like for them." (Interview 3, p. 4-5)

(4) Sub-Category: Service Provider Role.

As for their own role within this program, the service providers had many ideas. Of the five service providers interviewed, one respondent felt that their role in this program was to be involved in the research portion of the program design. They said, "My role is the research, right here, right now." (Interview 5, p. 7) The other four respondents felt that they could play a role both in the program design and in the actual program itself.

One of the roles that three of the respondents thought they could play is that of a supporter for the students when situations arise that they may not be equipped to handle. The service providers felt that they could offer guidance and act as a resource person for the students when necessary.

"There would be a real role for the case worker to be involved because if a student gets involved with a client and there's various work, that person is

having some difficulty um or they need some support from the case worker I could certainly see that being that where all three could work together.” (Interview 1, p.5)

“They could get some support from the case workers... I think that would be important to have that so the person wouldn’t be just left, floundering with it.” (Interview 1, p.5)

Furthermore, a few of the service providers also thought that they could help to debrief program participants when conflict or other issues arise.

Additionally, one of the service providers also saw her role as someone who could foster participation in the program through encouraging youth to partake and become excited about the program. She explained, “I would see probably myself playing a role in that I really encourage it, and I foster it and I get excited and try and generate that with them.” (Interview 3, p. 5)

Although the service providers seemed excited about the program, they also acknowledged that their role needs to be limited due to an already heavy workload. Even though some of the service providers saw their role as needing to be limited, they also felt that they could find the time for this program if they felt that it was helping the youth. One of the service providers explained, “We’re so swamped with how much stuff we’re doing already, the idea of adding more to our plates is kinda like uhh, you know, it kinda makes you kinda weary. But then in the long run, I mean, change is always good, especially if it’s helping people then I mean you know of course we’re all able to adjust if anything new is put on our plate, especially if it’s gonna help them then I think that it would be something that we would all be willing to do.” (Interview 2, p. 4) One suggestion from a service provider was that she would

like to be kept up-to-date with what is happening in the program so that she can encourage and praise the homeless youth who are participating.

"I would like to be part of it to a certain extent. Like not completely right in there. You know, just you know to let us know how they're doing, give us a little update, newsletter, whatever it may be. Just let us know how they're doing, that's all you know and so we can you know if they need: Say if they've done something really great then hey right on, good stuff, you know and oh yeah we heard about that." (Interview 4, p. 5)

(5) Sub-Category: Barriers.

The service providers felt there could be several barriers to this program. One of the main barriers that they saw was a lack of understanding between the students and the homeless youth. They felt that this could affect the ability of participants to connect with one another, to establish rapport and to relate.

"The separateness and I've heard that comment since you guys have even been doing interviews. I've heard that comment from a couple youth that um just not feeling, like it's just so far out there. You know, like university just isn't...it's not even in their reality." (Interview 3, p. 4)

One respondent also thought that the homeless youth would feel intimidated by the students, which would also affect relationship formation. She explained, "I think that number one is intimidation. I mean you guys are university students, they're gonna look at that and they're gonna think, yeah you know these people are way above us you know cause a lot of times they don't think very good of themselves." (Interview 2, p. 3) Although service providers thought that this could be a major barrier, a few of them also talked about how it is important for students to have a good understanding of some of the issues that homeless youth face and to come into the program without judgements or assumptions about the homeless youth.

"I think for the student if they don't have an understanding of what the, what the lifestyle is, what the backgrounds are of these kids, um or any homeless

person. If you don't understand what that is, you might have a really difficult time connecting with them. Um so that would be pretty important that you have a good understanding of that." (Interview 1, p. 2)

Another barrier that service providers talked about was the cultural barrier between the two groups and the difficulties that both the students and the youth would have in accepting and adapting to a new culture. One respondent talked about the difficulties that the homeless youth might have adapting to a new culture if they leave their familiar surroundings to spend time with the university students in this program.

"I think...it's kind of like going to China is what it is. It's um it's a different, it's a different culture sometimes and so they're moving out of their culture and moving out of their comfort zone. So that could be a problem. If you don't establish rapport right away, that could be a problem." (Interview 1, p. 2)

Furthermore, it was brought up that the youth understand their own culture, but might feel uncomfortable in a different environment. One service provider explained, "It's a whole little culture in itself and so they're real comfortable, they know the rules. They can function down here whereas some of the people from other areas of the city can't." (Interview 1, p. 3) Additionally, several service providers also felt that students would have similar difficulties in adjusting to the way of life of the homeless youth.

Another barrier brought up by service providers is that of commitment and follow-through. Although they felt that the homeless youth would benefit and enjoy this type of program, several service providers talked about the possibility of youth dropping out or not showing up after they have signed up because of their instability.

"People dropping out of it. That might be hard...So when you're looking at who you're going to bring into this, I guess probably you're going to aim or focus on the most stable. Because you don't want somebody that's been, or

you don't want to lose everybody, and that could happen. Street life pulls them back in or a crisis or whatever." (Interview 3 /4, p. 20)

"If you can get them there, that's the start because (laughs) they don't show up a lot of times that you know, they don't, they don't have very good follow through" (Interview 2, p. 2-3)

Furthermore, youth already participate in many programs and one service provider thought that this could be a barrier. She explained, "I think that a lot of the time they feel like what's the point. You know, is anything going to come of this, you know how many programs do we have out there, you know, what's one more." (Interview 2, p. 3) Finally, lack of transportation was also seen as a barrier to commitment and follow-through. Several service providers thought that participation would drop if the homeless youth did not have access to transportation that would allow them to get to the activities easily.

In addition, service providers talked about addiction, learning disabilities, mental illness and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder as potential barriers to the success of the program. Addictions were seen as the biggest barrier. One respondent explained, "It would affect their attendance and it would affect their comprehension, their ability to concentrate and their physical. It affects the whole shoot and shebang. You know, the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual. It affects everything." (Interview 4, p. 4) Furthermore, one service provider also felt that although some barriers may be able to be overcome, others might not, which could affect the program.

"Barriers might be learning disabilities, could be the FAS, the FAE, god knows, I mean it's a whole range of and whether some of it, some of it can be got around but some of it may not be able to be got around." (Interview 3, p. 4)

Overall, the service providers thought that barriers could be an issue, but that they could also be diminished through the rapport building and good relationship development.

(6) Sub-category: Relationship Formation.

In order to form successful relationships, the service providers felt that establishing a good rapport between the youth and the students is vital.

"To me it's all about establishing rapport, getting, liking that person, really valuing the person um and once you have that going then um you know the sky's the limit." (Interview 1, p. 3)

By building trust first, one service provider thought that the homeless youth might feel less like they are being invaded and more comfortable to open up with the student. She explained, "Because it's like, a person coming in and it's like invasion, you know, like what does this person want from me? How much am I, like how far am I gonna let myself go with this individual? You know, cause you all...one needs to be able to build that trust first in order to be able to trust the other person and back to the individual also. And then knowing too that once you trust someone then you feel more comfortable with them there and then you open up to them." (Interview 4, p. 2)

In order to build that trust, a few of the service providers talked about allowing students and homeless youth to pair up naturally.

"I think it would be up to the individual, personally. You know, whether, ...the student as well as the individual, like the person, who they would feel comfortable with, whether it's a male or a female. And I would think also to that the student needs to feel that safety also." (Interview 4, p. 8)

Although natural pairings seemed to be the preferred method, one exception according to one respondent could be with mothers. She thought that it would be

good to pair up mothers so that they could offer each other a lot of support and encouragement.

"Sometimes um we get mothers, you know we get mothers who are our clients and for the student you know to give support to the mother or something like that... You know encouragement, saying yeah, you can do it. A lot of them want to go back to school and they're thinking oh yeah right, no I can't go back. They need encouragement that way." (Interview 4, p. 11)

Overall, the service providers felt a feeling of comfort for both the homeless youth and the students is the most important factor in relationship formation within this program.

Category: Necessary Program Components

(1) Sub-Category: Goals & Objectives.

All of the service providers talked about the need for program goals to be realistic. They did not think that the focus of the program should be on attaining a university education, but instead felt that the students should focus on goals that are attainable for the homeless youth. By focusing on goals that can be reached, the service providers felt that the youth could be successful.

"A lot of them have mental illness and there's only so much that you can expect from them, you know. I mean, yeah we'd love to see them um go to college, get a job, have a family, but in a lot of the cases that's not the way it's gonna turn out, you know. A lot of cases being on AISH, having a nice little apartment and having food for the month is gonna be the best that they can do" (Interview 2, p. 6)

One of the goals of the program that was brought up by several service providers was increased support and increased feeling of connectedness for the youth. Providers thought that the program should work towards increasing the homeless youths' self-confidence and self-esteem through mentorship and encouragement from

the students. One respondent contended that the youth need to feel that they can accomplish their goals and that they are capable people.

"A lot just comes down to their self-esteem. If we could be making these people feel better about themselves. And give them that confidence to try something new. 'Cause a lot of them are just scared...and a lot of these people allow it to control them. So, if they've got that confidence in themselves to, to move forward and actually do something, I think that that would be great." (Interview 2, p. 18-19)

"I would think just the encouragement and knowing that they also can do it and that people, you know university students are really no different than themselves. It's just where they're at, at that time. Because a lot of the people that I work with tend to think that they're not good enough and they'll never be good enough. So that's part of what we try to do in here is get people back on that path and build self esteem [2 - Uh-huh.] Self-esteem is critical and a lot of them don't have it." (Interview 3, p. 3)

For this reason, several of the service providers felt that individual goals need to be realistic and achievable for the youth. They also thought that the students should support youth to attain whatever goals they have set out for themselves.

"I think still the encouragement for any occupation, whether it's university or not. Everybody is capable of something" (Interview 3, p. 4)

"I think if we foster the best that a person can be. Whether that be university or whether that be working at Mac's, whatever." (Interview 3, p. 4)

Furthermore, they felt that one of the goals of this program should be for homeless youth and university students to make connections with someone that they would otherwise not meet. This would allow both the students and the homeless youth to get to know a different group of people. Additionally, one service provider talked about how meeting a new group of people through this program would allow the youth to become connected to the community. She explained, "Some people are here for quite a long period of time and they're moving, they're making these changes and having someone connected to them from the outside, like who's not part of this

facility would be phenomenal. Like it would just be phenomenal for them."

(Interview 1, p. 15) Overall, service providers felt that one of the goals of the program should be increased support and connection.

Another program goal that was brought up by the service providers was increased knowledge or opportunity for both students and youth. Service providers felt that this program could teach students about the needs of homeless youth and about some of the realities of their lives, which may influence decisions that students make down the road. One respondent explained, "I think for university students to get to know really what, what the life of some of our clients is really truly like and that may influence programming down the road." (Interview 3, p. 2) Furthermore, several service providers also argued that this program could expand awareness, teach program participants about a different culture or way of life, gain a different experience and change judgements upheld by both students and youth.

"I think there'd be some real advantages to in terms of um, ah taking some of the, moving...the youth from this situation into um different experiences." (Interview 1, p. 2)

"One thing I can see...is judgement, judgement wise. You know, the university judging the youth in the inner city and you know vice versa" (when asked about what this program could change) (Interview 2, p. 2)

Finally, several respondents saw the potential for knowledge exchange between the homeless youth and the students that would help the homeless youth to realize that they are similar to students in many ways such as what they are interested in and that it is only their experiences that are different. In sum, service providers all discussed increased support and connectedness as well as increased knowledge and opportunities as two possible goals for the program.

(2) Sub-Category: Program Activities.

Service providers all thought that this program should focus on leisure activities and having fun. They feel that recreation is lacking for homeless youth and could see this program as filling that gap.

"Well from here um recreation is sadly lacking. You know getting involved in things that are healthy and um, when we talked about it, um with some of the clients here, they were really interested in that, they wanted to get something going and so I could see students really fostering that kind of a thing, like getting some like basketball, getting them out to the gym. Things like that would, they would really enjoy." (Interview 1, p. 4)

Furthermore, by keeping a recreational focus for the program, the service providers felt that more youth would be interested in the program and likely to stay committed to the program. One respondent explained, "If it's extra-curricular I could see a lot more people signing up cause a lot of the thing here is with money, we don't have money to go you know to put out to take them to the movies or money to put out to take them swimming or the extra stuff. Things like that that they would probably really enjoy to do but we just can't do it you know." (Interview 2, p. 5)

Moreover, several service providers did not think that this program should aim to improve life skills in a direct manner. Instead, they felt that the youth should learn by having fun and interacting with others.

"I think sometimes that everything is put so much on them, you know life skills, job, you know and sometimes that pressure is like they just want to push it away and say what about the fun part of it, you know. So I think if, if they're offered that a little bit more maybe they'll be able to balance the two." (Interview 2, p. 6)

Service providers felt that the homeless youth would benefit from being exposed to activities that will help them to learn to live a healthier lifestyle.

The following list includes service provider suggestions of actual activities that could be included in the program:

- Sports: swimming, racquetball, anything active, learn new sports that the homeless youth have never been to exposed to, basketball, baseball, roller-blading

"I would strongly encourage it to be leisure focused somehow. Something that people could share in. Or you know like an opportunity to learn say tennis or racquetball like a lot of these people will never, err I shouldn't say will never but at this time don't have that opportunity" (Interview 3, p. 7)

"You know doing some sports stuff together as groups and stuff." (Interview 3, p. 9)
- Drama/Music: karaoke, listen to music, play music

"You know anything active or activity wise would be really good. And music of some sort is usually pretty common I think." (Interview 3, p. 7)
- Art: pottery, various arts and crafts

"Well I do know that they need um you know something more to fill their time. As to what they need I think it varies from individual to individual so and I know I know that just from what things we've set up here, you know whether it be pottery or karaoke or things like that you know, um just trying to keep them busy" (Interview 2, p. 2)
- Group Activities: group could participate in a new activity in the community (youth tend to procrastinate/not get involved), group could get involved in something that the youth have never done before, that they would enjoy, that they would be successful at, any activities that open up conversation so that people can really get to know each other, spend a night on the streets to see what it's like, fundraising as a group

"Lets say there's some activity out in the community that they might like to get involved in and they tend to procrastinate because oh I don't know how to

get there or I don't know anybody or those types of things. To have somebody to go with you, sort of the bridging piece of it um even going and checking out schools um there's so many things out there that a person might, going and getting started up in the library, things like that where they may not have had the opportunity to experience, to do it." (Interview 1, p. 8-9)

"Get them involved in something maybe that they've never done before but they enjoy it and then they're a success at it. [2 - Okay.] So that's another success for them and by doing that I think it really opens up lot's of areas for conversation and to really get to know each other. So it would build self esteem too." (Interview 2, p. 3)

- Outings: going to appointments, going to the bank (learning how to interact with the teller), check out different schools, go to the public library, go to the movies, go out for coffee, attend a Pow-Wow, round dance or other cultural event, go to an AA meeting in the community, go to the South side (or other parts of Edmonton that the youth have never seen), exchange social environments (start with the homeless youth's environment then move out into the community after rapport has been established)

"Going out to Pow-Wows. Going out to cultural events" (Interview 4, p. 3)

"Sure there's AA meetings here on Wednesday nights in my class and that's for people that do live here. However there's some of them that don't you know really want to trust and then open up because it's home base, you know. So they want to go to a meeting somewhere else out in the community" (Interview 4, p. 3)

"Going to the bank and speaking to the teller because they don't know how to do that or they've never learned how to do that. Just simple things like that, driving them over to the south side because they've never been to the south side." (Interview 5, p. 6)

(3) Sub-Category: Structure.

All of the service providers thought that this program should start with group activities and then move towards more one-on-one interaction.

"I wouldn't suggest that you do a one-on-one until you get to know each other a little bit. You know, you might start off in groups." (Interview 3, p. 9)

They also thought that it was important to start out with structured activities within the group. One respondent explained, "Maybe you'd want to start with a structured program and move out from there, that you know once you get a feel for it."

(Interview 1, p. 8) Additionally, one of the service providers felt that it was important for both the homeless youth and the students to have some input into the program activities.

"I guess there has to be some structure, right in order for anything to work, some guidelines, um, and it would have to be a mutual agreement. What the kids want, what the students can do." (Interview 5, p. 4)

Finally, one service provider suggested a combination of group activities and one-on-one continuing throughout the program. She explained, "Almost like a focus group or a group discussion or something. Like a one-on-one and then maybe everyone gets together and talks about their experiences. You know what's it like when we're out there. Talk about their feelings." (Interview 3, p. 3) By combining group activities and one-on-one opportunities, the service providers felt that successful relationships would be able to be developed.

In terms of time commitment, the service providers thought that program participants should meet one or two times per week. The all agreed that an evening or weekend program would be the best because many of the youth have commitments

during the day and evenings tend to be times where the homeless youth need something to do.

"I think because lot's of the people here are trying to do something, trying to go to school, they're trying to go to work things like that, so they are in day programs. Um so evenings or weekends probably would be really good times." (Interview 1, p. 4)

"Because you've got some that are in their programs during the day...you got a lot that don't do anything at night, you know. A lot of time I find that that's they end up, if they're going to go use, that's when they do go use or that's when they are gonna to get into their trouble because you know there's no work, there's no program going, there's no school you know so." (Interview 2, p. 5)

In terms of the overall length of the program, the service providers were split. A few respondents talked about having a longer term program so that there is time for relationships to be formed. She explained, "I like a longer term connection rather than a shorter term connection. Um, and that's just my own personal thing because people, they have people come and go in their lives." (Interview 1, p. 15)

On the other hand, several other service providers talked about keeping the program short term for a couple of reasons. First of all, program participation by the homeless youth tends to decrease over time, which lends support to a shorter program to ensure participation.

"And as for length, I mean, um, um, sometimes I feel like the longer programs are harder for them because it is longer. But then, um, like just even for instance with the personal development program, the first month you'll have twenty, the second month you'll have ten, the third month you'll have five. You know, so they do start to dwindle as time goes on. And, and I'm not sure if it is because of the length, or, or just issues that come up in their lives." (Interview 2, p. 16-17)

Furthermore, one service provider was concerned that it would be very difficult for the youth to lose someone that they have become attached to. She explained, "The

problem is I guess with anything like this is once a bond is attached it could mean another loss and for some of these people that's huge you know to lose yet another person that they've become attached to. So I don't know, you know if you want to make it short enough that it's just a short experience before people really do get attached or whether it's going to be long term. I don't know, but for some people losing that again is pretty tough." (Interview 3, p. 11) Although she felt that the loss of the relationship could be difficult, she also said that it would be helpful if the program had very clear beginning and end points that were laid out at the beginning.

In terms of commitment to the program, the service providers were hopeful that the youth would commit to the program if the expectations are laid at the beginning and if the focus is on fun and leisure.

"Your're gonna have to really lay it out as to what exactly are the expectations. You know, so when people make that commitment, hopefully you're going to have most people carry through. If they don't understand the commitment they may not. It might not mean anything to them and sometimes a really good explanation of why you're doing it helps." (Interview 3/4, p. 20-21)

Furthermore, several service providers felt that small incentives along the way would help to increase the youths' commitment to the program by keeping them interested and motivated.

Service providers also discussed their ideas around potential program participants. All of the service providers thought that the program should not be completely left open and that all program participants need to be receiving services through Cunningham Place. One respondent explained, "I would say, not everyone 'cause we have no control if you're just going to say everybody, I mean that could be, could have all sorts of people and I think safety is got to be considered too. So if it's

a client of Cunningham that could mean that they're in program or it could mean that they're living here." (Interview 3, p. 8) In addition, several service providers thought that this program would be a good fit not only for residents of Cunningham Place, but also for clients of HomeWard Integrated Support Services.

"There's a lot of people out there that need a lot of support. You know it's not only the residents, but the clientele that we get, you know a lot of them need positive role models, yeah." (Interview 4, p. 10)

Although all of the service providers felt that leaving the program somewhat open would be beneficial, one respondent was concerned about having a lot of people coming into Cunningham Place to receive services at night, especially if there is only one service provider working.

"I do think of this as their home. They have people coming in and out of it all day and should they have that all night as well, you know? Um, and ah like you know I like the idea of more than just the tenants here getting it of course any individual that can ah, anybody that it would help would be you know...But like I say I think just with the workers here on nights, depending if it's still just the one, I think that would just be too much for them to have to watch." (Interview 2, p. 9-10)

Finally, service providers talked briefly about the need for both homeless youth and students to show genuine interest in the program before being allowed to participate. She explained, "They have to show the interest. As long as they're not doing it to get out of something else. They want to be interested. But I think that's for students too." (Interview 3, p. 8) A strong interest would likely increase the commitment to the program and would help to ensure that program participants are compassionate and understanding.

(4) Sub-Category: Orientation.

Service providers talked about five main components that need to be included in orientation for the university students. They also felt that it is important for those who are involved in providing the orientation to students to have had experience working with homeless youth so that they can speak from experience.

"I think that you would probably be better off with somebody who has worked with homeless youth. Yep, so you have the benefit of that experience." (Interview 1, p. 7)

The first orientation component that most of the service providers talked about was information about addictions. One respondent explained, "I think it's really good to have some knowledge of addictions and the kind of drugs that are out there on the streets so you know what kinds of things a person might be dealing with." (Interview 1, p.5-6) Furthermore, several service providers thought that it would be important for students to recognize some of the signs of someone who is high on drugs. One service provider suggested that the police are brought in to provide drug awareness training because there are police officers who have a lot of experience with street drugs.

Another component of orientation that service providers discussed is orientation about mental health issues such as depression, suicide and bereavement. Several service providers pointed out the need for students to have suicide prevention training because it is a potential issue.

"I think ah, it's important to have some knowledge of mental health...and to be able to sort of see if a person is in depression or if you think they're at risk, in that way, I would think that that would be kind of important. Um (silence) hmm. People are coming from all different types of backgrounds...Um so I would think suicide assessment, you know like um how, whether a person is at risk or not, would be a good thing to have." (Interview 1, p.5-6)

"Maybe some bereavement, you know some bereavement just in case you know, someone is going through a hard time. To give that person, you know, to console that person and maybe the students will know how to go about that. You know and what to say, what not to say." (Interview 4, p. 6)

In addition, one service provider also thought that orientation should include information about what to do in the case of a disclosure by the homeless youth. They expanded, "Just to give them an update on what to expect, just in case someone discloses to you. You know maybe someone discloses sexual abuse or whatever, something like that." (Interview 4, p. 10)

Service providers also thought that students need to have an idea of the homeless youth culture. Information including prostitution awareness and risks of living on the streets should be a component of the orientation. Although service providers were careful not to categorize the youth that they work with, they did acknowledge that many of the experiences that homeless youth have had will be very different from the experiences that students have had, so it is important for students to be knowledgeable about those differences.

According to service providers, a fourth component of the orientation portion of the program should include information about safety. Some of the topics that were mentioned include, assertiveness training, healthy boundaries and conflict and anger management. In addition, students should also be trained to use universal precautions when working with the homeless youth. Students need to be aware of potential safety issues that might arise, including arguments and violence and have the skills to know how to deal with difficult situations.

In addition, service providers also felt that orientation should include communication and relationship building skills for students. They felt that skills including how to approach the homeless youth, how to use appropriate body language, how to engage in conversation with the youth and how to offer positive reinforcement would be important. Several of the service providers also talked about the need for students to explore their own prejudices and judgements about homeless youth before they entered into a relationship with a homeless youth. One respondent explained, "I think that would be something you'd want to focus on, because people might think that they are non-judgment, but um you might want to do some exercises around that to just sort of explore that. Because often times, just because of where you've been in your life and where you've experienced you know, you have little prejudices and ya, definitely, I think that would be something you would want to concentrate on." (Interview 1, p. 13)

Finally, service providers felt that orientation about the need for patience and understanding when working with this population would be beneficial for students. Overall, orientation needs to provide students with an awareness of some of the issues that might arise.

"To have some awareness before you, a person starts dealing with some of the types of clients we deal with would be really good to have." (Interview 5, p. 7-8)

Category: Safety

Respondents discussed the need for the program to ensure the safety of all participants. They focused on issues around boundaries, personal safety, and the need

for mediation. Most respondents felt that in order for this program to be a success, safety issues need to be addressed.

(1) Sub-category: Boundaries.

The importance of healthy boundaries was raised by all of the service providers. Several service providers discussed the need for students to be confident about their boundaries as many homeless youth do not have proper boundaries or have weak boundaries.

"You do have to be strict to some degree because as I was saying with the boundaries, they'll push and they'll push and they'll push and if you're very passive they'll push to non-stop." (Interview 2, p. 7)

Additionally, the service providers felt that the students need to find a balance between being a volunteer mentor and being a friend to the homeless youth. In order to help students to develop good boundaries, the service providers felt that training should include information about healthy and unhealthy boundaries, as well as information on how to teach the homeless youth about establishing healthy boundaries. One respondent explained, "I guess there's a balance that needs to be struck. Um I think that you have to have a warmth and a rapport with the person... but at the same time, people can get confused, they can get mixed messages...A person really has to be sure of themselves. They have to you know set, have their boundaries firmly in place so they can teach the other person what boundaries are. Their boundaries are weak." (Interview 1, p. 7)

Service providers also provided several examples or scenarios that might arise during the program that could become issues if boundaries are not firmly in place. First of all, several service providers discussed how many homeless youth develop a

crush on someone if they receive extra attention or care. In this situation, respondents thought that it was important for the student to establish a boundary right away if a crush develops.

"Because they don't have you know a proper parent or role model or what not and the women here, you know and it's all women who work here, and they get that little bit of extra care from them, right away they develop crushes and stuff. So you have to know right away to put that boundary down and say, "Okay listen you know what I do care about what's happening with you but this is where it ends." And usually as soon as you say that of course you know it ends right there and usually they get a lot better but unless you put down those lines and those boundaries, they'll just keep going you know." (Interview 2, p. 7)

Service providers also thought that issues around borrowing money could come up if boundaries are not put into place at the beginning of the program. One respondent explained, "You might have even a kid that smokes and they increasingly become friendly and it's like can you lend me money for cigarettes. So yeah, I think those things need to be discussed." (Interview 3, p. 10) In addition, one service provider felt that as program participants become friends, issues around illegal behaviors could surface.

"If you're hanging out with each other, um what if a client, I'm just trying to think off the top of my head here, runs into a friend, another friend that uses drugs on the streets and they have a university student with them and that client feels like oh this university student is a friend, friendly enough that they can start talking about drugs or maybe even make an exchange of drugs." (Interview 5, p. 8)

Furthermore, one service provider felt that at times the homeless youth divulge too much personal information to others, which could potentially cross another program participant's boundaries. She explained, "There's, like sometimes people tend to say too much. You know, share too much with someone else, you know and then that's like giving a little too much information that you don't necessarily need to give. So

safe boundaries, don't say too much, okay this is the limit. Like everybody's got their own space right." (Interview 4, p. 8-9)

In order to ensure the safety of all participants, the service providers felt that it is important to discuss boundaries and to have firm guidelines as to what the relationships between participants in this program are going to look like. Furthermore, respondents also thought that the program itself should have boundaries so that everyone is clear about behavioral expectations. Service providers saw respect for one another's boundaries as central to this category.

(2) Sub-category: Potential Safety Issues and Maintaining Personal Safety.

The service providers saw the potential for several other safety issues and stressed the importance of establishing guidelines that will help to keep program participants safe. One of the issues that was brought up by several service providers was the potential for violence or aggressive behavior. In terms of the policies at Cunningham Place, no violence or intimidation is tolerated by tenants or by staff. Although the service providers felt that violence should not be tolerated, one of the respondents discussed that it is a very fine line. She explained, "I think that there is a thin line there though too because there is times when they are gonna to get angry or upset and you know they're not very good at handling their emotions in a positive way so, so you know I think in a lot of ways you can't always penalize them for if they do have a screaming match you know. It's like okay yeah, maybe that isn't right but they haven't been taught what is right." (Interview 2, p. 8) For that reason, this service provider felt that it was important for students to be skilled in conflict management.

Another potential safety issue brought up by service providers involves drug use among the homeless youth. The service providers talked about the importance of ensuring that all of the homeless youth who participate in the program have been screened by the staff at Cunningham Place to reduce the risk that the youth is a hardcore drug use.

"I think if you open it up wide open, god knows, I mean you could get somebody who's really a hardcore meth user, you just don't know what's, I mean I've never been threatened here but at the same time you got to be somewhat careful." (Interview 3, p. 8)

Although service providers admitted that being a client at Cunningham Place does not completely eliminate the risk that a homeless youth is an active drug user, it does lessen the risk. Additionally, several service providers saw the possibility that homeless youth could be carrying drugs or weapons. In order to reduce this possibility, several service providers felt that clear expectations and repercussions for actions should be established before the program commences.

Finally, a number of service providers also brought up mental health problems as a potential safety issue for university student participants. One respondent explained, "Some of the clients may be dealing or may have mental health problems and anything could, could spark a crying bout or a um not necessarily an assault, but something that could be interpreted like that." (Interview 5, p. 7) Because a large number of the youth are dealing with mental health issues, the service providers felt that students need to have a good understanding of mental health. Furthermore, several service providers also saw the potential for students to take advantage of the vulnerability of the homeless youth. One respondent felt that some of the youth are, "very vulnerable and they've been...used sexually all their life and along comes a

young student and it, it could work both ways." (Interview 3, p. 9) Therefore, safety guidelines need to be established for all program participants.

In order to increase safety, the service providers felt that program participants should follow the working alone guidelines. This includes things like establishing a check-in system, having firm start and end times, holding meetings in public places and carrying cell phones.

"There was um some stuff done on working alone that was handed out to workers here so you might want to check into...when like I'm out I have a cell-phone I can call in and um, so you know you check back in and you would want to have some safety procedures in place for people so that when they are out with people, you know when they start and when they finish, those kinds of things." (Interview 1, p. 6)

Other suggestions that service providers made to increase the safety for all participants included no use of home phone numbers, addresses or last names; establishing safety regulations regarding transporting program participants; and providing students with training around potential safety issues. Finally, service providers recommended that this program have waivers that program participants must sign in order to participate in activities, especially if the activities are taking place in the community.

Student Results

In this study, thirteen students participated in focus groups. The ages of the students ranged from twenty-two to thirty-five years of age, with the average age being twenty-five years old. Six of the participants were in Human Ecology, three were in Health Promotion and four participants were law students with a focus on Native studies. In terms of years of study, five participants were in their fourth or fifth year of their undergraduate degree, four students were in either their second or

third year of their Masters degree and four students were in third year law. Nine of the participants were female and four were male.

Category: Limited Experience

Students had limited experience with homeless youth. Experiences ranged from no experience at all, to limited volunteering experience at soup kitchens or community centers. Due to this inexperience, several participants felt that this program could be an opportunity for students to have their first experience in working with homeless youth. They felt that only interest should be necessary in order to take part in this program.

"At some place you have to start at and...if you have any general interest in it...through school or that sort of thing then this would be a good, a good first experience" (Focus Group 1, p. 5).

Although students generally agreed that this program could serve as a first experience, there were differences among students with regards to what the motivation to become involved should be. Responses ranged from resume building to helping others. One respondent felt that students who want to get involved solely to build their resume should not be potential candidates for the program. On the other hand, another respondent felt that motivation was not as important as participation.

"It's the same with any volunteering, that you, that anyone would do...most people are there to beef up their resume but it's once they start doing that then they realize the sensitivity and they start getting involved and really interested...further than just I want something on my resume" (Focus Group 1, p. 5)

This opinion was supported by other students. One student responded, "It completely changes your outlook, you know, however you went in, it doesn't matter what your reasons for going into it are, usually the outcome is the same." (Focus Group 1, p. 5)

Overall, the potential for change was seen as more important than beginning motivation for involvement in this program.

In addition, one focus group felt that this program could be a good way for students to find out if working with homeless youth could be a potential career path. Students would have the opportunity to see whether working with this population is a good fit or if they would be better suited for a different population.

"What anyone might get out of it, might be the opposite and is like...whoa, this is not something I can handle...I could get the job but...when it comes to dealing one-on-one with a homeless person ...I might not be able to deal with it... It might give someone the opportunity to realize that that's not where they want to be" (Focus Group 2, p. 5)

(1) Sub-Category: Broadening Perspectives.

Due to the limited experience of students in working with the homeless youth population, many assumptions and preconceived ideas existed. Although most students had never met a homeless youth, they made the assumption that all homeless youth want to get off of the streets and that they want increased stability in their lives. In addition, preconceived ideas were articulated by one student when s/he said, "homeless people are certainly a marginalized community and...have more health risks than, than someone who is living in a in a stable environment" (Focus Group 2 p. 3-4). The concept that homeless youth have more health risks than other populations was brought up numerous times in student focus groups. Finally, one student made the assumption that the lack of connection to a group of friends might make getting off of the streets difficult for the youth.

Although most of the assumptions made by students were congruent with the findings in the literature on youth homelessness, there were several instances where students challenged each other's assumptions. For example:

"5 - Well I was just making the assumption that...most people they want to improve themselves. Do you think that's a valid assumption?

6 - I, it just comes across a little bit patronizing maybe. For us to like walk into somebody who's on the street and you know trying to take care of their whole life and to protect themselves and we like have all the answers. [5 - Oh yeah, oh, no, no.] You know and kind of [5 - Yeah, yeah] that's all." (Focus Group 3, p. 7-8)

Furthermore, one respondent stated, "until you get to the point where you actually understand what it means to be like that...that's where...false and misunderstandings come from" (Focus Group 2, p.4).

(2) Subcategory: Hesitation & Uncertainty.

Along with assumptions about homeless youth, students reported some hesitation and uncertainty about this type of program both from the students' perspective and from the perspective of the homeless youth. Students recognized that the two worlds are quite different and several respondents brought up the uncertainty over being able to relate. As one respondent said, "if it was just like chucked to any university student...I can see why there would be total hesitation and like and we're just not on the same level here why are we talking" (Focus Group 1, p. 4).

Differences in education and upbringing between students and homeless youth were brought up and students felt that homeless youth might be uncertain of this program because of these issues.

"Depending on the execution...there might be hesitation on, the, the homeless youths side of things... those are two totally different spheres right like people who are looking like at achieving a post secondary education as opposed to

people who don't even have a home like those are pretty, pretty different ends of things, education wise, maybe up-brining wise" (Focus Group 1, p. 4)

(3) Subcategory: Support for the Overall Program Idea.

Although there was some hesitation on the part of students, they were also very supportive of a program that would link university students with homeless youth. Students felt that this program could be a great way to expand education and to obtain practical knowledge.

"I just think that it makes a lot of sense in a lot of ways. Um, you're bringing in people with maybe some expertise in the field, as we're getting education or training and are looking to expand our training or education." (Focus Group 1, p. 4)

Additionally, students also thought that it could potentially foster positive experiences for both students and youth.

While most students were very positive about the prospect of this type of program, they also saw some potential challenges with linking these two populations. They recognized the potential for abuse from both sides and other safety issues that may arise. These issues as well as other barriers to linking these two populations will be discussed in depth in a later section.

Category: Reciprocal Relationships

(1) Sub-Category: Cultural/Mutual Exchange.

Clearly, students discussed the need for this program to involve two-way, reciprocal relationships between students and homeless youth. They felt strongly that the program should be about a mutual exchange of knowledge and experience and not about university students trying to teach homeless youth. As one student explained, "it's important for it to have a...two way relationship sort of basis where it isn't

university students coming in to show homeless youth how to become...successful or socially integrated...and not necessarily a place where university students maybe get disillusioned...but that there's mutual exchange of experience, of knowledge...I think that the mutual exchange is the most important part" (Focus Group 1, p. 7). Another student saw cultural exchange as a result of the relationships formed between homeless youth and students, instead of as a result of the program, but later went on to say that the program could facilitate the exchange.

In addition, students rejected the idea of a mentorship program and instead focused on how the program should provide an equal learning opportunity for both groups.

"It should be a mutual exchange because then you've got a more [even] playing field... you don't want...certain people not to feel adequate or like they aren't bringing anything to the table" (Focus Group 1, p. 8).

In addition, several students talked about the need for homeless youth to feel autonomous and in control of their decisions. For example, one student stated, "I don't think they're looking for a mentor...they're making choices on their own and they want to stay that way." (Focus Group 3, p. 5) Another student expanded on this idea, "I think like [for] people who are coming from backgrounds that have abuse and...a disenfranchisement kind of situation, it's really important that they feel in control of their decisions and their life and they're not leaning on somebody but that they're making decisions and they're participating and giving..." (Focus Group 3, p. 5)

One focus group went a step further and talked about completely switching the roles of the students and the homeless youth.

"Maybe set up the whole program differently. You know, have the street people at Cunningham, set it up for them, so they can help university students." (Focus Group 3, p. 37)

The idea of learning from homeless youth was supported by all groups and several university students talked about how they have no real concept of what it is like out in the real world. Although the role reversal was not brought up in other student focus groups, it lends support to the concept that university students can learn as much from homeless youth as homeless youth can learn from them.

In order to accomplish the goal of mutual exchange, students believed that activities need to facilitate the sharing of stories between students and youth. Students felt that through the exchange of stories, they would not only be able to understand their differences, but also come to see their similarities. One student talked about each person sharing their story until "it moves towards incorporation where...it starts kind of separate but then comes together... that's a good way to parallel the lives too, to show that we're not so different (agreement from the group - head nods) that you know there are a lot of students living in poverty." (Focus Group 1, p. 12)

Furthermore students wanted to see activities that not only facilitate homeless youth to improve their quality of life, but also to include, as one student explained, "something that would be self-improving for both of you, you know. Like not that I've already done this and you should do it and I'll just come along. It might be something that's beneficial to both." (Focus Group 3, p. 8) The idea that this program needs to involve mutual exchange as well as activities that benefit both parties was something that was found across groups.

(2) Subcategory: Student Role.

Although students supported the idea of a mutual exchange, they also saw themselves as taking on several roles within this program. First of all, students saw themselves as being a resource person for the homeless youth. They felt that they would be able to help the youth to access resources or to assist the youth depending on their individual needs. Even though they saw their role as one of a resource person, they continued to reject the role of mentor, saying that "the word mentor... it's a one way transfer of information." (Focus Group 1, p. 6-7) However, students did believe that they could help to stop the youth from falling through cracks in the system and that they could offer guidance. At times, students contradicted themselves, one minute talking about making the relationship as equal as possible and the next discussing how they thought that they could help homeless youth.

In addition to their role as a resource person for the homeless youth, the students also saw their role as developing a friendship with the homeless youth.

"I think that they should just be a friend actually. You know, somebody that you can trust and go to with your problems...because maybe some of these youths left their families really early and...they might even regret not having a parent or a sibling to talk to or something, so I think that's important. For support and ah somebody who's just gonna be on your side." (Focus Group 3, p. 17)

Students also felt that the role of the student should be to be a stable person in the homeless youths' life that they can count on, who can offer positive feedback and who they can just spend time with. Several students contended that the role of the student as a support person for the youth is more important than any skills that may be developed or any knowledge that may be acquired through the program.

In order to fulfill the roles that students envision for themselves, they also discussed several qualities that would be important for program participants to possess. First of all the students discussed the need for open and honest participants. Secondly, they also felt that students need to be sensitive to others and need to be able to work effectively with different populations. Finally, respondents thought that the students who participate in the program should be positive, supportive people.

(3) Sub-Category: Homeless Youth Role.

When asked about the role of the homeless youth in this program, the students also had many ideas. The most frequent response from students was that the homeless youth would provide "a huge cultural experience for university students who just have no concept or, you know, no idea." (Focus Group 1, p. 19) Further, the students felt that the role of the homeless youth should be determined by the youths themselves. The students felt that the role of the homeless youth should be to make a commitment to the program and to have an openness to engaging in a new relationship. The students did not want to place the homeless youth in a role of being mentored.

"It might be kinda frustrating for the person who is homeless like if they come in and they're the same age or maybe even older than the student themselves and let's say supposedly you're mentoring them." (Focus Group 2, p. 7)

Once again the students focused on reciprocal relationships when discussing the role of the homeless youth.

(4) Service Provider/Coordinator Role.

Students also discussed several roles for the service providers or the program coordinator. The students saw one of the main roles of the service provider/coordinator as being a support person for the students.

"Having the resources to pursue if you know someone says something to them that that they don't know how to deal with maybe, like having a really good resource base for those students who may get people telling them all sorts of things and they're like where do I go from here." p. 21

Students in all three of the focus groups talked about the need for someone to talk to when a situation arises that they don't know how to deal with. In addition, students also saw the service provider/program coordinator's role as being someone who they can talk to if things are not going well in the program. One participant felt that "for both the university and the homeless there has to be like a go-to person that if they don't feel they're getting [anything] out of it, because there's no point in the homeless youth sitting through three months...and feeling like oh god I gotta go...and I don't know, nothing happens there, I don't know why I go." (Focus Group 2, p. 17) Furthermore, the students felt that the service provider/program coordinator could lead a debriefing or a discussion around what could change to make things better.

(5) Sub-Category: Barriers.

One of the major barriers that students discussed with regards to a program that links university students with homeless youth was ideology.

"Each of us come with different, we all have worldviews and that could be a barrier if we aren't, we don't keep it in check...if we impress too much of ourselves." (Focus Group 1, p. 17)

Several students were worried about students imposing their views onto the homeless youth and felt that this could create a barrier between the two groups.

Another potential barrier is the transient nature of both homeless youth and students. One student explained, "I think it will make it very difficult in that you're dealing with a transient population and that one week you could have someone who is...developing a good rapport with someone and the next week that person isn't there anymore and ...you worry and if some people worry too much and they get...too much involved in it and that becomes very sort of risky." (Focus Group 1, p.16-17) Several other students felt that they would worry if a homeless youth in the program just stopped showing up. On the other hand, students also recognized that they too are a very transient population and they thought that homeless youth might get left over and over again as students move on. This could perpetuate a cycle that exists in some homeless youth's lives.

"If you were brought up in a background where you went from foster home to foster home, like from place to place and it's you know continuing that through this kind of program might be more harmful than anything." (Focus Group 2, p. 10)

Students also brought up commitment and time issues as other potential barriers. One respondent worried that "people are...very optimistic when it comes to giving their time (laughter) and then they forget how big of a commitment it can be especially during certain times, like finals." (Focus Group 1, p. 17) Students felt that the time commitment for this program would need to be realistic and would need to fit within student's schedules in order to successfully overcome this barrier.

Category: Necessary Program Components

(1) Sub-Category: Goals & Objectives.

Focus group participants felt that this program needs to include both overall program objectives as well as individual goals for every program participant. One

respondent explained, "I guess where you, everyone has to have their own individual objectives and then, as a program, you have to have a larger objective." (Focus Group 2, p. 30) Although students felt that the experience of each individual within the program would be different, they also thought that it is important to have set goals to limit the focus for the program. In terms of overall program goals, students thought that increased support and increased knowledge or understanding would be important goals to include. By focusing on a few key areas, all program participants would be able to accomplish their goals.

"I think maybe that's the whole idea here, is that you have one thing that you're focusing on. You can't be all over the place trying to attack all these different things...you need one thing so that you feel at the end, you feel that you've done something, that they felt like they've done something." (Focus Group 3, p. 43)

In terms of goals for students, respondents thought that increased knowledge of homeless issues and realities, increased sensitivity, skill development and being a resource person for the homeless youth would be important.

"Any experience that we would have would increase our understanding of the situation, um the realities faced by ah, people from what seems to be a completely different life, set of life experiences" (Focus Group 2, p. 4)

"Huge eye opener" (Focus Group 1, p. 19)

"I think it's really important that people have this um resource or this extra sense of support, um so as long as you're giving them support and and ah showing them that there's someone out there who cares for them because a lot of times people in this situation don't have people in their lives that they can turn to or, or rely on so I don't think it really matters what kind of activity you do, whether it's group or individualized, just that there is someone there that that they can look to for help." (Focus Group 1, p. 8)

Respondents also had some ideas with potential goals for homeless youth.

They thought that having an increased access to resources and support, an increased

sense of autonomy and empowerment and increased permanency or stability would be important goals for homeless youth to work towards.

"A sense of autonomy that is different from the autonomy you that you feel when you have no boundaries, like living on the street and that sort of thing. There's a false sense of freedom I think that, ah, happens with homeless youth on the street. But building a sense of autonomy that: I have control of my life, and in control of myself and I can make decisions that change me. And that, it's not a sense of, I can't do anything about this and that if I want to, this is where I can go for help. It's, it's empowerment." (Focus Group 1, p. 25)

Students believed that by establishing clear objectives and goals, all program participants would be able to accomplish something and to make positive changes in their lives.

(2) Sub-category: Program Activities.

When asked about what activities could be incorporated into this program, students had many suggestions. They saw the need for this program to include leisure activities that facilitate bonding between the students and the homeless youth. Students felt that it is important that the activities facilitate the mixing of the groups so that an exchange can take place.

"It would work well as long as there's full like integration because you know what if you had a group of university students and a group of homeless youth and then they all know each other kinda so they stick to themselves and are always doing the activities together and then there's no real you know exchange. That's the only place I can see the exchange getting lost" (Focus Group 2, p. 11)

Furthermore, students thought that it was important to engage in healthy activities that are at a low cost or no cost so that the homeless youth could continue to partake in those activities on their own.

"I think healthy options, you know, with a lot of homeless they don't know what else they do so they are often getting in trouble or, or doing things that

maybe they shouldn't be, um, things that maybe are of no cost so these are things that they could do on their own as well." (Focus Group 1, p. 10)

In addition, students felt that the program should begin with structured activities and then allow program participants to have a say in what other activities they would like to try. Therefore, the activities could change depending on the interests of the group. Finally, students thought that by engaging in activities, there would be less stress on program participants because the focus would be on partaking in the activity and not on the actual participants. One respondent explained, "If we're like I don't know, painting a place or you know if there's something that we're working on together then the personality things are not so intense because you're not like facing each other but you're facing a task." (Focus Group 3, p. 17) By engaging in activities, program participants could get to know each other while having fun.

The following is a list of actual activities that were suggested by students during focus groups:

- Sports: bowling, football, walking, any activities in a gymnasium, indoor soccer

"If you put them in like maybe sports or something that generally, most people kind of like, like, that's it gives a little bit of a bonding...you can be on the same wavelength no matter where you come from" (Focus Group 1, p. 6)

- Drama: story-telling, movie making (some participants could be the actors, some the directors, some the crew)

"Different sort of drama, dramatic things are cool and doing stuff like that so and that that could also be in sort of a group activity that shows a lot of different personalities, groups including students." (Focus Group 1, p. 11)

- Art: crafts, camera work (give each person a camera and ask them to take pictures during the week that represent their lives, have the film developed

and then arrange the pictures so that they tell a story, share the stories),

painting

"I think a lot of people are very artistic so you could do it through artwork"
(Focus Group 1, p. 11)

- Outings: to a park, to the movies

"Do different things...I think that would be like a big thing just to go to the movies with a bunch of people who are working, you know and they're not out all night doing whatever." (Focus Group 3, p. 6)

- Group Activities: icebreakers (get people talking about their lives), learn coping strategies for stress reduction, cooking, volunteering, 8 minute friendship talk (do an activity like the 8 minute dating thing on the first night – an easy way to get to know everyone), have a guest speaker, start a small business, party at the end of the program to celebrate successes

"I think there's always an activity that people do...that's an icebreaker where you have a sheet and you walk around and ask people like do you have a cat... maybe it's sort of a slightly more complex way...where you would tell you're story and the homeless youth could talk about story or a story that's, that's similar to theirs and then exchange similarities and differences around the stories and then build on there like and maybe like and then maybe it moves towards incorporation where you know like yeah, maybe it starts kind of separate but then comes together." (Focus Group 1, p. 11-12)

"One other activity could be cooking. It's actually really a good ice-breaker." (Focus Group 2, p. 11)

- Tutoring/Help With Work/School: read books on self-development, help with high school equivalency, homeless youth could sit in on a university class
"They could sit in on a couple of classes or something" (Focus Group 3, p. 21)
- Help Youth to Access Resources: students should have access to a resource binder that contains all of the resources that homeless youth can access and they should help the youth to connect with appropriate resources

"A big binder with phone numbers and you know if your match um you know needs assistance or and you choose to help them you know feel free to come in [and] grab the book." (Focus Group 1, p. 14-15)

(3) Sub-category: Structure.

When asked about overall program design, students felt that the program should move from a group setting to one-on-one activities as relationships are developed. They supported this structure because they believed that this formation would be a more natural progression that would help to foster relationships and reduce pressure on program participants.

"A good way to start things off too is in a group because then there's no pressure to keep this two person conversation going, it can be I'll talk to this person 'til they get tired, then move around and probably find someone better, like specific people might connect more or you know find it easier to talk and they'll find each other within the group...I really like the idea of a group" (Focus Group 1, p. 9)

In addition, students thought that this structure would help program participants to establish rapport with other participants through activities that served to connect the two groups. By moving from a group setting to more one-on-one activities, students believed that individuals with similar interests would connect and that relationships would not be forced.

"Start with a group setting and like form your own partnerships then you know it might work out better because you would have more interests." (Focus Group 3, p. 13)

Although students felt that allowing partnerships to occur naturally would be the best option, they also thought that there should be some sort of back-up plan to match participants who have similar interests if they did not move into a pair. Moreover, they also supported on-going group activities throughout the program even after pairings had been made. One group explained, "1- I think maybe you could continue

the group even after. 2 – Throughout. 1 – Ya. Like have groups, I don't know, every third Friday of the month or something." (Focus Group 3, p. 24-25)

Students also discussed the need for both structure and flexibility to be a part of the program design. In the beginning, students felt that structure was important so that program participants knew what to expect. Once the program has been established students believed that the program design should be flexible enough to allow participants to take ownership of the program and make suggestions as to future directions. This type of structure would increase the likelihood that program participants feel comfortable, as well as increasing the chance that each program participant gets something out of the program.

"It might be helpful to have some sort of structure to start with, so that um people have somewhere just to start because you know it's hard if you just go and you meet someone and you don't know what to do" (Focus Group 2, p. 4)

"You want to build in enough flexibility in the program that ah whatever everyone comes to the table with, they get out of it." (Focus Group 2, p. 5)

Furthermore, students felt that after the relationships have been formed there should be more flexibility in terms of allowing the pair to choose what they want to do.

"If you make the relationship first and then you become ownership of your relationship between the two of you, then you can choose the activities that you want to participate in and how much time you want to spend together" (Focus Group 3, p. 13)

Therefore, students felt that both structure and flexibility would be important components to the program design.

Although the majority of the students supported a program that moves from a group setting to a one-on-one setting, there were several other suggestions made by respondents. One respondent thought that the program should remain in a group

structure to ensure that there would always be a mass of people and program participants could pair up with a different person each day. Another student talked about alternating group sessions with one-on-one sessions as a possible program design.

"If they meet twice a week, maybe have one just one-on-one so that you can have the attention, you can talk about what ever you need to talk about, but maybe do, like have kind of a group thing, go out and do outings and stuff" (Focus Group 1, p. 9)

Overall, these alternative structures were less supported by students.

According to students, a time commitment made by all program participants is also a necessary component of the program structure. Although total consensus was not reached among students, most students felt that they would be able to manage meeting once per week for about one and a half hours. They also believed that it would be realistic for the program to run for the eight month school year.

"I think it depends on how much time you want you want people to exchange because if it's during the regular school year, during regular course load, then it's not going to be that much because this is, there are huge issues, these are heavy issues and for someone who would be doing it say once a week or something like that with a full course load is pretty big. But again, it depends on what the nature of the relationship is and how long it's gonna go for because if it's longer then you could probably do once per week." (Focus Group 2, p. 9)

"Why don't you make it a year so then you at least have 8 months? You can do one and a half a week, one and a half hours a week and turn it into a one year." (Focus Group 3, p. 20)

In addition, students thought that times and dates for group activities should be set so that everyone can make a commitment to attend.

"I think it's important to have um set kind of times and days so that people can trust that they can come back to this place and this group" (Focus Group 3, p. 9)

Overall, students supported an on-going commitment to this program throughout the entire school year.

One concern brought up by students around time commitment included the location of the program. They thought that it would be more difficult to commit a large amount of time if the program is located off campus because of the travel time that would be involved. Furthermore, as many students do not have vehicles, focus group participants were concerned about the logistics of getting to and from activities.

"I think a big logistical issue would be transportation too for a lot of students... undergrad students don't have cars so that would be a big thing that would either draw people or not." (Focus Group 2, p. 14)

Lack of transportation could decrease the student's ability to attend activities. One student suggested that some of the transportation issues could be solved by carpooling.

Additionally, students were concerned about commitment levels. They thought that it is important for all program participants to commit fully to the program and make every effort to attend all activities. Students felt that it would be distressing if program participants did not show up on a regular basis and thought that it would be important for program participants to inform someone if they could not attend. Finally, students were concerned about making this program part of a university practicum because of feasibility and concerns about fittingness. Although a few students felt that having the program fit as a practicum would be a huge incentive for students to participate, the majority of students were much more supportive of having a voluntary program.

In addition to time commitment, students saw certain individuals as more appropriate for this program than others. First of all, students felt that the homeless youth who are involved in this program should be somewhat stable. This would increase the likelihood that they would be able to participate over time, as they are less transient.

"Like more of a long term shelter where there is the idea that it's moving towards some level of permanency, maybe not there, but like through developing sets of skills" (Focus Group 1, p. 19)

Secondly, focus group participants thought that students should be targeted from particular faculties so that interest would be high. They also thought that students should also have to go through an interview process before being admitted into the program. By targeting certain groups, students felt that the program would be more successful.

(4) Sub-Category: Orientation.

Respondents felt that orientation is a necessary program component in that it will help to fill the gap between the student's world and the homeless youth's world. They did not feel that this type of program could run without orientation.

"If you went in without a training program, I would be very scared" (Focus Group 2, p. 15)

Additionally, students thought that orientation would help to increase the confidence of students involved in the program.

Students also felt that before orientation was offered, students should have the opportunity to sit in on an information session that outlines the program so that they can decide for themselves whether or not they want to be involved. One student explained, "Have an information session first with all, with all your

expectations...and then have your workshop at a later time so those people registered can attend." (Focus Group 3, p. 29-30) Students thought that the information session should be very realistic so that students can make an informed decision about whether to participate or not.

According to the students, program orientation should include several components. The first component of orientation should be to work out logistical issues such as scheduling and transportation to increase the likelihood of commitment. Secondly, students felt that orientation should involve a clear explanation of the overall program objectives, as well as a time for individual goal setting.

"I really think that both the students and the homeless youth there has, like there has to be at the beginning like some sort of training session or maybe not the homeless for the training session but a session and there has to be like clear objectives made by everyone. So almost like personal objectives like there making sort of a statement for themselves saying, you know this is what I want to get out of it." (Focus Group 2, p. 17)

Additionally, they felt that the orientation should include discussions around assumptions and preconceptions about homeless youth. One student explained that orientation should include "what to expect and what not to expect, what if, just sort of outline their, their preconceptions about what a situation like this is like." (Focus Group 2, p. 15) Having a component where participants can discuss their ideologies and the importance of not imposing personal views on others was also brought up during focus groups. Furthermore, students felt that program participants need to have awareness of some of the issues that might arise and should also have the capacity to deal with those situations.

"I think you have to be conscious about if there are certain higher or special needs in the group that maybe certain people aren't maybe equipped to deal with, so just be aware of that." (Focus Group 1, p. 10)

"My biggest worry would be um just with the ethical issues, how, how would I as a mentor handle things if I found out about you know illegal activities that a person was doing or um or if they were you know they had suicidal ideation or they knew someone else that had suicidal ideation, I mean then you know something like that that sort of calls to have action taken, where am I in all of this? What do I do?" (Focus Group 2, p. 15)

Moreover, students felt that the orientation should teach the students skills that will help them to gain the homeless youths' trust, which they felt is related to reciprocal sharing.

"Training in sort of how you gain people's trust. Because I think that a large part of that um trust and getting them to share things with you is you sharing with them and that exchange that (focus group participant) was talking about naturally" (Focus Group 1, p. 6)

Finally, students believed that orientation should also include information on how to start conversations with and relate to homeless youth. By combining all of these elements, students felt that they would be equipped to become a part of this program.

Although respondents felt that orientation should be mandatory for students, they did not feel that the homeless youth needed to be part of the orientation component. Instead, students saw a briefing session for homeless youth as being adequate. Some of the stereotypes that students hold about homeless youth came out of this section of the interview in that the students felt strongly that homeless youth need to be told what the consequences for illegal actions will be should they chose to engage in those actions. They also felt that the briefing session could include information about expectations for the homeless youth.

"I wouldn't say necessarily the training session but just a briefing to say you know this is what these people are here for... and these are the guidelines that

surround this whole thing as in if you tell them you're doing anything illegal, you get arrested, you tell them that you're having problems with something and they're going to go to somebody else, um you know they're here for a resource but they're not here as you know all these different things, so I think that would be important to do, do like a heads up to those things" (Focus Group 2, p. 16-17)

"At least have some kind of workshop so that they would have an idea of what, what their, the expectations of their um behavior or whatever, like you know you're not to bring drugs or drink" (referring to homeless youth) (Focus Group 3, p. 16)

Although students had very different ideas for orientation for students and homeless youth who will be participating in the program, they also said that the homeless youth need to know that there is someone in place who they can go to if they feel they are being mistreated by university students. One student explained, "Students might act in a derogatory manner so that they have somebody else that they can talk to if they feel that the person's treating them you know like, oh you're below me." (Focus Group 3, p. 16) Students who participated in the focus groups recognized that there are potential issues that could arise from both youth and students, but felt that the students require a more in-depth orientation session than the youth.

Category: Safety

(1) Sub-Category: Boundaries.

One of the main safety issues that was brought up by students was the need for this program to have clearly defined boundaries for all participants. Students felt that parameters that outline the relationship need to be set in order to have a clear understanding of where the relationships are going. Several participants thought that there is the potential risk that students might over-empathize and become too involved with the homeless youth. For example, "This person is you know severely

overdosed on drugs, they don't have a place to sleep tonight. Well, come sleep at my house." (Focus Group 1, p. 15) For this reason, students felt that the program needs to clearly define where the relationships start and where they end.

On the other hand, some students felt that the boundaries within this program need to be flexible to allow for the development of friendships. These students did not believe that the program should promote going to each other's homes, but also recognized that it is possible for the student-youth pairs to become good friends, which would change the relationship and the boundaries of each person in the pair.

"I think that we kind of have, kind of, like in friendships too, you have sort of layers...and it takes kind of a long time before you generally invite people to your house anyway, you know. So, yeah, I don't know, I think like, just maybe wait until the trust is built and then let it be flexible when the people feel like that's okay." (Focus Group 3, p. 18)

For this group, trust was seen as central to the relationships and boundaries were seen as something that could change as trust was developed.

In addition, students recognized that unhealthy boundaries could result in problems for both students and homeless youth. First of all, participants felt that the program boundaries need to clearly articulate that this program has not been developed for students to practice their counseling skills on homeless youth. Secondly, students believed that their responsibilities need to be defined in the event that an incident occurs while they are out in the community with the homeless youth. For example, one student questioned whether or not it is the student's "responsibility to act as you know guardians or act as sort of leaders and take charge?" (Focus Group 2, p. 13) To this student, fulfilling the role of a leader in the case of an incident would contradict the even playing field that s/he believed the program should attempt to

establish. Furthermore, students also felt that it was important for the homeless youth to understand their boundaries and the repercussions if they crossed those boundaries. For example, "if [the homeless youth] know at the very beginning that [if] they confess to having some sort of suicidal thoughts or um mention something that may be illegal that that...something is gonna happen, [students] can't just sit on that, it's not it's not possible." (Focus Group 2, p. 16) Finally, students articulated that clearly defined boundaries need to be established in order to prevent abuse from either the students or the homeless youth. Students felt that having healthy boundaries in place from the on-set and re-emphasizing these boundaries throughout the program will help to ensure the safety of all participants.

(2) Sub-category: Potential Safety Issues and Maintaining Personal Safety.

In addition to issues around boundaries, several other potential safety issues were brought up during student focus groups. These issues included behavioral issues, substance abuse problems and assault or violence. Due to the potential for incidents to occur, students believed that safety structures need to be in place, as well as training needs to be offered on how to deal with tough situations.

According to students, one of the ways that safety for participants could be improved is by starting out with group activities and then moving to one-on-one activities after trust has been built.

"Lots of kind of group events and stuff like that so that people get to know and trust each other like that before you know I don't know kind of personal things." (Focus Group 3, p. 3)

Additionally, several students talked about the need to maintain a safe environment for everyone throughout the program. One student expanded, "I think neutral space is

important...it's one of those things that helps to maintain a safe environment for everyone involved, that when you're on mutual ground it's kind of, no one, there isn't a tendency to feel possessive of that place." (Focus Group 1, p. 16) Furthermore, students felt that another way to increase the safety for all participants is to have a check-in system in place.

"Maybe just have like a check-in thing, like if you guys are going out alone, just give people a call to say hey we're here now and make sure it's public and yeah, something like that...maybe both people tell a buddy that they're going out with this person." (Focus Group 1, p. 16)

Students felt that having a check-in system should also be accompanied by a safety plan that program participants can use in the event of an incident.

(3) Sub-category: Mediation.

Besides safety issues, students also discussed the need for mediation to help program participants deal with difficult situations. One student suggested that "we need some kind-monitoring program and ah people that like if there's a problem in any of the relationships that are set up, then there is someone else that you can go to and talk about it." (Focus Group 3, p. 3) Students felt strongly that conflict within the program needs to be dealt with immediately and that a mediator should play a role in helping to resolve issues that arise. Furthermore, one student thought that the mediation process could help program participants to deal with conflict in a positive manner.

"I think a lot of people...who come from broken homes and stuff maybe do not, like they're afraid of conflict and unable to deal with it, so if we try and set up a kind of um mediation process or something like that with the group of people...where we could sit around a table and say look, what's going on, can we, you know, talk about it together and how do we resolve it and stuff like that." (Focus Group 3, p. 15)

Students felt that both the students and the homeless youth who are going to be involved in the program need access to someone who can mediate conflict as it arises. Students believed that by dealing with problems in a controlled and up-front manner, program participant safety could be increased.

Homeless Youth Results

This section will examine information gathered from homeless youth. A total of fifteen homeless youth participated. Six respondents were female and nine were male. The ages of the youth were between eighteen and thirty. At the time of the interview, the youth were either participating in one of the programs offered at Cunningham Place, working, going to school or seeking employment or a program. Due to the complex nature of homelessness, the youth were not asked the length of time of their homelessness. Instead, any youth who was receiving services from Cunningham Place met the inclusion criteria. Once again, information has been broken down into similar categories that will be discussed in detail in the following segment.

Category: Limited Experience

(1) Sub-Category: Broadening Perspectives.

Homeless youth expressed many beliefs about the assumptions and judgments that they felt others have of them. They talked about feeling discriminated against because of the way that they look. The homeless youth felt that many students would automatically assume that they are drug dealers or users because of the way that they dress. One youth explained, "So for instance, I walk into the U of A, just the way I'm dressed, looking the way I do, people automatically assume I'm a drug dealer [2 -

Yeah.] or I'm like a drug user. [5 - Right.] So they're all like what's that guy doing here, right." (Focus Group 1, p. 5) Additionally, some of the youth felt that they would get turned away from university because of the way they look. According to one respondent, "Like if one of us tried to go to Yale, they would turn us down so fast (laughter) because of what we look like." (Focus Group 1, p. 9) Furthermore, the respondents also felt that they are treated poorly because of their ethnicity.

"Like just the way we're treated [12 - Okay.] and like they it's because the way we're dressed or maybe your nationality and the way we're dressed, you know that we're bad people and we're not." (Focus Group 1, p. 5)

"But a lot of people think that Native people are just a bunch of drunks right." (Focus Group 1, p. 5)

Another assumption that homeless youth believed students held was the idea that there is a lack of diversity among the homeless population. Respondents talked about how many people assume that all homeless youth come from dysfunctional families. One youth explained, "Some of us actually came from nice families. I screwed it up myself by being overly violent and I had to learn what was going on when I got punted out of my dad's house." (Focus Group 1, p. 19) The homeless youth felt that it was important that students understand that not all homeless youth are the same.

In addition, several respondents talked about feeling disrespected or looked down upon by others because they have just been released from jail.

4 - "Cause when I got out of jail to, everyone was like eww, and they still are.

5 - How so?

4 - Well just their attitude. No-respect.

6 - When you first get out of jail, nobody knows what it's about. They right away assume that you're just a punk." (Focus Group 2, p. 9-10)

They felt that students need a better understanding of their lives.

Finally, the homeless youth also talked about how they believe that students fear them or look down on them because of the way that they dress or their behavior.

"I went to the U of A and started yelling and screaming and being loud and obnoxious and everybody started grabbing their purses and their wallets and their coats and started running." (Focus Group 1, p. 4)

"When you see a college student sneering at you because you're walking down or because you're having battles right on campus and they don't like that, it's like so what your mom and dad paid for college and we can't sit in this building." (Focus Group 1, p. 9)

The homeless youth felt that students would wonder what they were doing on a university campus and would not treat them with respect.

Respondents also talked about feeling like others do not think that they have anything to contribute to society. The homeless youth discussed feeling like others do not want to get to know them because they see them as being useless. In contrast, the youth saw themselves as resilient people who are intelligent. They talked about how they think that living on the streets requires a lot of intelligence and survival skills. One homeless youth explained, "I find there's a lot of, a lot of just like you know, they see how you look and it's just you know why would I want to get to know that person. That person's got nothing to offer society. Nothing! But if you actually listen to, if you actually listen to a street, street kid talk, he's got generally more or less, they're smarter than more of the book smart people I know 'cause it takes a lot of intelligence to live on the street. A lot. [7 - Yeah.] It takes less intelligence to live in a house, to pay your bills." (Focus Group 1, p. 6)

Several of the homeless youth also held a stereotypical view of students. First of all, many of them held the assumption that all university students are smart and beautiful. Some of the youth also talked about how all students have a lot of money

and are completely supported financially by their parents. Additionally, a few of the youth felt that students, especially males, depend a lot on their parents and take advantage of the money that has been given to them.

"I think all college kids are mommy, daddy paid for college and they're screwing around, you know." (Focus Group 1, p. 9)

"They're just a bunch of mama's boys." (Focus Group 1, p. 10)

On the other hand, many of the homeless youth were very opposed to placing students into stereotypical categories. Instead they talked about how it is entirely possible that students could come from similar backgrounds to themselves.

"College people may have come from exactly the same background as us but they wanted to prove to themselves to be good. Like I'm going to college and I'm not going to be one of those people. I know what kind of backgrounds others come from. I've been there." (Focus Group 1, p. 12)

"Maybe a lot of university people do know what it's like on the wrong side of the tracks and that's exactly why they're not there." (Focus Group 1, p. 21)

Furthermore, several youth felt that even if students did come from different backgrounds than themselves, they could still be very similar in other ways.

"We're exactly like them. Yeah we might have a little bit different backgrounds, but we are exactly like them. There is no difference. We're all equals. (Focus Group 1, p. 8)

Although the majority of the youth agreed with this perspective, several of the youth felt that they "have a lot more obstacles to go through than [students] do." (Focus Group 1, p. 8-9)

After debating various stereotypes and assumptions that exist, some of the youth discussed the need for both groups to change their perceptions. Several youth felt that other focus group respondents held opinions of students that were way off. For example, one respondent said, "I think your perception of university people is

like really gross 'cause you know university people aren't exactly like not trustworthy and stuff. They're not non-believers. [9- But, but...]They just haven't been here and experienced it, right." (Focus Group 1, 14) Furthermore, several other homeless youth interjected when a few group members discussed how students all have a lot of money and easy lives. They felt that it is up to everyone to stop judging others.

7 - Maybe you guys are the ones who are being judgmental and prejudice.

9 - Open your eyes, look around you. It's not just us who are being judgmental. Maybe if people would stop judging us, I would stop judging people.

7 - We're doing the same thing! You guys are doing the exact same thing!

12 - We need to end the cycle. We can end the cycle just like they can end the cycle." (Focus Group 1, p. 10)

(2) Sub-category: Hesitation & Uncertainty.

Due to the stereotypes that exist about homeless youth, the respondents have several concerns. First of all, they were hesitant about linking with university students because they worried about fitting in. Several respondents talked about feeling inferior because they do not have the material things that students have. As one student explained, "They think they're better than you. They think you know what I've got a house, I've got money, I've got a job and then there's you right, you're walking into this place and you get all embarrassed, it can get, because you're just like yeah man look at all these people, they're dressed really good, they got all these clothes and they got all this bling and we've got all this shit." (Focus Group 1, p. 8) The youth felt apprehensive because the worlds are so different. Additionally, several respondents feared that the students would try to change them. A couple of respondents talked about negative experiences that they had had growing up where a group that they were in did not accept them for who they are.

"A good example of this, I was in this one youth group in grade ten and basically what it was is you had to dress like they did, you had to act pretty much have the same job as they did, your parents had to make the same kind of money as the did, just to fit in. Why do you think I left? Because of that I felt like there was a whole bunch of hypocrisy, you know." (Focus Group 1, p. 23)

They did not want this program to involve changing who they are, but rather to accept them as they are.

(3) Sub-Category: Support for the Overall Program Idea.

Although there was some uncertainty from some of the respondents, overall the homeless youth were very interested in a program that would link them with university students. They talked about how university students are intelligent and have a lot to offer the youth. One respondent talked about how "[they] can learn about other stuff than just bad stuff" (Focus Group 1, p. 3) from university students. In addition, the youth also felt that they have a lot to offer the students. Throughout the focus groups, the homeless youth seemed enthusiastic and were excited about this program.

Category: Reciprocal Relationships

(1) Sub-category: Cultural/Mutual Exchange.

The homeless youth immediately talked about this program as an opportunity to exchange knowledge and ideas.

"See, they've got book smarts, we've got street smarts. Let's put them together and see what comes out." (Focus Group 1, p. 4)

They are interested in seeing what this combination could result in and want not only to show the students their lives, but also to get a better idea of the student's lives as well. One homeless youth explained, "I think that a beneficial thing on both sides

would be to take you know, this is, this is their atmosphere and then take them to our atmosphere, you know [7 – Yeah.] This is, this is where I grew, this is, these are my old stomping grounds and then this is where I go to school, this is my classroom.”

(Focus Group 1, p. 11-12) The need for equality was emphasized and they saw the opportunity to learn from each other and to meet a new group of people.

“So we can get to know like the students and that like and so they can see what we’re like.” (Focus Group 2, p. 5)

The homeless youth felt that this program needs to be reciprocal so that everyone involved takes something away.

(2) Sub-Category: Student Role.

The respondents had many ideas about what they felt the role of students should be. Some of the youth felt that the students’ role could be to help them to make decisions in their lives.

“They could tell you which path to go down. Like which direction is the best.”
(Focus Group 1, p. 11)

Furthermore, several homeless youth also talked about the possibility for the students to take on a mentorship role.

“Maybe like a mentor or something. If you want to get somewhere, right? ‘Cause a university student could be more helpful to give you a lot more information...somebody on the street has less resources so they could have more resources right, through the university student and then they could get to where they want to be, right?” (Focus Group 1, p. 32)

Another area where students could provide mentorship to youth is in the area of goal setting. Several of the homeless youth talked about being disappointed because they have been unable to meet goals that they have set for themselves. Students could

assist youth in setting realistic goals as well as supporting the youth so that they can achieve their goals.

"I have at times troubles setting goals for myself when it comes to my future career because every time I try and ah, start something it kind of backfires. I try to tell friends about it, and they're like maybe that's too unrealistic and that's ah, I just assume they're judging me an everything goes awire. (Focus Group 1, p. 36-37)

"What happens is that I recognize is that just about any goal I set isn't going to ah, isn't gonna happen the way I set it so I just set as many goals as possible... Ya I just basically go from, basically...what it says on the seat of my pants." (Focus Group 1, p. 37)

Additionally, some of the respondents who were interested in furthering their education felt that students could take on the role of academic guide and help them to make the transition back to school.

"Maybe like um, like say I was just going to go into university, maybe what it's gonna be like in the beginning, if it's gonna be more rough at the beginning or if it's gonna be harder later or kind of what to expect for when I go." (Focus Group 2, p. 13)

"The university students can find the information, be a resource person, give them some information of what they need to do, what courses they need and give them an eye-opener of what they really need and what their status in life is and where they want to be, right. So show them a journey of where they want to go, right and be like okay well if you want to be this kind of person you can do it, right" (Focus Group 1, p. 13)

Another role that youth saw for students was that of supporter, motivator and someone that they could have fun with. "They could be someone to hang around with, to have fun with." (Focus Group 1, p. 11) By spending time with students, the youth thought that they could have a better idea of what university is like and the opportunity to meet new people.

(3) Sub-Category: Homeless Youth Role.

In terms of the role that they saw for themselves, the homeless youth had many ideas. First of all they thought that they have something to offer in the way of showing students what their lives are like. Additionally, the youth felt that they could take the role of helping students to understand issues such as addictions firsthand. The respondents said that they would be open to talking about their lives to help students to get a real-life perspective.

7 - "Even if there's like students that are taking a course in being a drug counselor. It think there's quite a few of us, addicts, that are cleaned up now. 6 - We could help them in that area. Drug counseling." (Focus Group 2, p. 12)

7 - "What it's really like from, not the books." (Focus Group 2, p. 12)

The homeless youth also saw their role as being teachers in that they could teach the students about resilience and survival. The youth felt that they have many life skills that they can offer.

(4) Sub-category: Service Provider/Coordinator Role.

Although the homeless youth did not talk much about the role of the service provider/coordinator, they did bring up the importance of having strong leadership in order to make this program a success. One respondent explained, "We need like the right people as advisors or leaders in this sort of thing...Once you get a bad advisor, a bad leader it just goes straight to hell." (Focus Group 1, p. 24) Having a good leader seemed to be important to the youth.

(5) Sub-category: Barriers.

Despite an interest in the program, some of the homeless youth also felt that there are several barriers. One of the barriers that the youth talked about was

misunderstanding between themselves and the students. They thought that the students might think that they are better than them and would judge the youth based on their past or behaviors.

9 - "The misunderstandings. [7 - Yeah.] Them misunderstanding us for what we're saying.

11 - They think they're better than us." (Focus Group 1, p. 8)

Several homeless youth also felt that a barrier could be their own lack of motivation.

One homeless youth explained, "A lot of people that are here, don't really have the motivation to go through with what they really want to do in life." (Focus Group 1, p.

13) In addition, several youth were apprehensive because they thought that they would be self-conscious around the students and would feel like they do not fit in.

"Yeah I'm, I'm scared to go to college. Cause I don't I don't even have a clue what the hell it's going to be like. I could walk through that school and I'll be in this one class and everybody will look at me and they'll just stare at me and I'll just think what the hell you lookin' at." (Focus Group 1, p. 11)

Although several of the youth worried about what others would think of them, one respondent believed that this barrier should be overcome.

"Like I think that if less people worried about what more people think about them, if you didn't worry so much about what other people thought about you, you could go do what you want to do, get there, be there, be that person that you want to be without having all of these barriers of having, being self conscious, you know." (Focus Group 1, p. 14)

Overall, there was only one participant in both focus groups who felt that the barriers would not be able to be overcome and the program would be likely to fail.

S/he explained, "I see this whole program falling apart. I don't see this program holding together all that great. [1 - Ok.]. You know, to be perfectly honest. As a whole. I don't know if we could work together as a whole. It's something that, everybody has their own schedule, to pull everyone together would be, like, you

know, I can't even contact everybody whenever I want, she can't, she's always here, but, you know, everybody does their own thing. They're going to forget about it." (Focus Group 1, p. 34) S/he felt that the homeless youth would not be able to work together, to find a time that worked for everyone and to commit to the program. On the other hand, when one of the focus groups was asked, "Do you guys see um any barriers with this program or anything that might make sort of matching students with you guys as kind of challenging or difficult?" They responded,

6 – Not really.

7 – No.

(other group members shake their heads no)

1 – Okay.

4 – No, I get along with anybody." (Focus Group 2, p. 9)

Therefore, the perceptions of potential barriers differed between the groups and among the individuals within the groups.

(6) Sub-category: Relationship Formation.

Focus group respondents had several suggestions with regards to forming relationships with students. One youth suggested that both the homeless youth and the university student complete a personality test and then are paired based on similar personalities. Another homeless youth suggested that the pairs be formed based on similar interests. Additionally, one respondent felt that they should be paired randomly. S/he explained, "I think it should be kinda random, just like you and you should go talk and you and you should go talk." (Focus Group 1, p. 23) Finally, one youth suggested being paired with someone who is opposite so that you would have the opportunity to meet a new group. No consensus was found with regards to how program participants should be paired but youth seemed open to several ideas.

- 6 - Make the university student and us do a personality test.
- 3 - Or see like what kind of things they're doing at the university. If that's something you're interested in then you could
- 4 - I think they should be opposites. [5 -An opposite?] Yeah. [5 - How come?] Mix it up a little bit. (Focus Group 2, p. 7)

Category: Necessary Program Components

(1) Sub-Category: Goals & Objectives.

According to the homeless youth, the main goal for this program should be to create an eye-opening experience for students that will increase their knowledge and awareness of homeless issues, clarify misconceptions and ultimately change their perceptions of homeless youth.

"They've never ever thought about anything like this. But they come and they get to know us and they find out really, you know what, these kids are pretty much all right. And then one of their friends says why do you go do that man, it's stupid, they're nothing and then that person can tell them you know what you're perception of them is totally incorrect and then it, it becomes a cycle. It would keep going and going and everybody would tell everybody and sooner or later it would get around that not everybody's bad." (Focus Group 1, p. 14)

"Personally I think that it would be a good idea for this to happen. Because then maybe some people's opinions would change. Not everyone's as open viewed as [4 - You guys.] other people." (Focus Group 1, p. 12)

One of the youth talked about helping the university students to come to a better understanding of homeless issues by sharing their experience, from their perspective. S/he explained, "They can use your eyes." (Focus Group 1, p.7) Furthermore, several youth felt that this program could provide insight for students into people with physical and mental disabilities.

The homeless youth also felt that a goal of this program should be to provide these two groups of people with the opportunity to meet people that they generally

would not talk to. By meeting new people, the youth and the students would broaden their social relationships and receive increased support.

"The chance to meet people that they generally wouldn't want to talk to right." (Focus Group 1, p. 4)

Although the youth saw meeting new people as one of the program goals, they also felt that the program should only serve to create an exchange to increase awareness and not to try to change participants. Two respondents explained,

7 - "If we're to dress like they did and try to pretend to be them, we wouldn't last. Okay and if they were to try to pretend to be us, they wouldn't be able to fit in, but maybe it would make them to understand where we come from if we took them around our friends and the people that we used to hang around with...

9 - And they, and they took us around theirs." (Focus Group 1, p. 24)

Additionally, the youth also saw an increased understanding of university as a potential objective. One respondent explained, "We'll get the inside on everything. Like you get to know what university's all about. You get to learn, I don't know I guess what the people are like." (Focus Group 2, p. 5) They thought that they would be better equipped to make decisions about continuing their education after they have had a chance to meet university students.

Youth also thought that the program should include overall program goals as well as individual goals. They felt that everyone who participates should write down what they want to get out of the program and any resources that they need. The youth talked about it is important for each individual to work on his or her goals so that they are not wasting people's time.

"I think it's just like here, if you're not compliant with the goals and stuff, that like, each individual should have their goals and if they're not compliant with the goals, then you're just wasting everybody else's time. You know?" (Focus Group 2, p. 24)

By setting individual goals within the program, the homeless youth felt that the program could be beneficial to all participants.

(2) Sub-Category: Program Activities.

The homeless youth thought that this program should focus on social activities that would help to alleviate boredom in the evenings.

"Social activities. That's all everyone needs here is some leisure programs."
(Focus Group 2, p. 3)

They felt that the activities should not only be recreational, but they should also be meaningful. The youth thought that this program could help them to learn about different types of people and could also help them with personal development. In addition, respondents felt that the program participants should be involved in choosing the activities. They suggested that the program have a variety of activities so that everyone has a chance to participate in something that they enjoy. The homeless youth also talked about the importance of keeping in mind limitations of some the participants, including pregnancy and past criminal behavior, when planning activities. Furthermore, the respondents also thought that it is important to stay away from juvenile activities and to ensure that all of the activities are age appropriate.

2 - "It's not like in some programs where they get you to do this game where they you say my name's ____ and I'm a tomato and blah, blah, blah.
6 - No, that's like grade five." (Focus Group 2, p.15)

In general, there was strong support for a program that involves leisure activities that also encourage learning.

One potential aspect of this program that was brought up a lot by the homeless youth was activities that allowed program participants to learn about each other's

lives. For example, the homeless youth suggested that they go to the university so that they could experience what university life is really like. The respondents said that they would be interested in shadowing a student for a day or going to a class that interested them so that they could get a better understanding of what university life is like.

"Go and sit in a class of five hundred. [1 - Okay.] That would be fun."
(Focus Group 2, p. 6)

"Like shadow one of the university students for a day or something." (Focus Group 2, p. 6)

On the other hand, the youth also felt that the students should spend some time in the youths' environment so that they can understand their realities. Although the group agreed that students need a better understanding of the youths' lives, there was some disagreement in the group as to whether or not the homeless youth should take the students to where they used to live or whether they should just talk about their experiences.

9 - "Show them where you came from.

4 - You can just tell them. You don't have to like take them on a fieldtrip.

9 - You know it's different. When you, when you, when you tell take, when you tell somebody oh yeah I grew up on the streets, they're thinking ah yeah, naw you're a kid man. You grew up in what shelters and rooming houses. You grew up couch surfing. You gotta take them right there and go boom!

4 - They can understand okay. They're not gonna not believe you. Why would they not believe you?" (Focus Group 1, p. 13)

Regardless of the method, the homeless youth felt that it was important for the students to understand where they came from and vice versa.

One homeless youth suggested an activity that would help the group to talk about misconceptions and to come to a better understanding of each other. S/he explained:

"Okay since there's some misconceptions about each other's lives right [1 - Yep.] university students or whatever. Okay, so the street kid makes up a questionnaire to give to the university student say like, "What would you do in this scenario?" "If you were here what would you do if you didn't have any home?" "What would you do if you were addicted to drugs?" "What would you do if you couldn't find this?" "What would you do, like right?" Give that to the university students, they fill it out and they get an idea of like well, well maybe I can't answer these questions cause I haven't been there, right. So they give out their educated guess of what they would do in that situation and university students give us an IQ test or something so like something for the street kid right [12 - No, not an IQ test.] like a similar one right.

9 - Something of their background.

1 - Like what would you do if you had to study for a midterm?" (Focus Group 1, p. 20)

This activity could give program participants an opportunity to learn about aspects of the other person's life that they know nothing about and could potentially help to evaluate what participants learn about each other as the program progresses.

In addition to the aforementioned ideas, the following is a list of some of the other activities that were suggested by homeless youth during focus groups:

- Volunteering: at soup kitchens (the Mustard Seed)

"Go to the Mustard Seed and volunteer." (Focus Group 1, p. 16)

"A lot of people here too, they've been out of the community for a long time, so maybe they could do some like volunteer work or something. Set up to get some of the people back into the community. That would be good for a lot of people here." (Focus Group 2, p. 23)

- Field Trips: go to places where each participant spends time or used to spend time (soup kitchens, the university, shelters, the street), camping

"We should go on a camping trip." (Focus Group 1, p. 17)

"Take them to the Mustard Seed. It's a good place to go and learn about different types of people. There's sketch cases, everybody." (Focus Group 1, p. 7)

- Drama: create a video about Crystal Meth that could help to educate others

"That video thing sounds like a good idea because then we can, I know I would personally like to help other people who haven't gotten into crystal meth or whatever, not, to understand a little bit more what they can get into if they do do it." (Focus Group 1, p. 16)

- Sports: swimming, football, soccer, hockey, watch a sporting event (possibly at the University), bowling, billiards, volleyball, track day (with lots of fun events)

"Just meet in your guy's field and just have a big like track day, not like a track day but you know what I'm saying. Get a couple of footballs going." (Focus Group 2, p. 15)

- Group Activities: go to West Edmonton Mall (water park, rides), go to a park

"Go to the West Edmonton Mall water park!" (Focus Group 1, p. 17)

"Like why don't we do something with action, a little group thing in a park. I love playing in a playground." (Focus Group 1, p. 17)

- Games: board games (Monopoly)

"I want to play Monopoly." (Focus Group 2, p. 4)

- Fundraising: the program could involve activities that would help to fundraise for the program itself and recreational equipment for Cunningham Place

"Like fundraising and things like that. For the program." (Focus Group 2, p. 23)

(3) Sub-category: Structure.

The homeless youth felt that the structure of this program should include both group activities and one-on-one activities, with an emphasis on one-on-ones.

"We need one-on-ones." (Focus Group 1, p. 23)

"I think there should be a lot more one-on-one than groups." (Focus Group 2, p. 6)

They felt that the combination would be most beneficial to them because they could get to know someone on a more personal level and could carry on a conversation without interruption. One respondent explained, "Instead of having people like you know like everybody try to say things at once, you can actually have face-to-face conversations with somebody." (Focus Group 2, p. 6) In addition, the respondents also thought that the program should start off with structured group activities and then move towards one-on-one activities that are more flexible and less structured.

In terms of time commitment, most of the youth felt that two meetings per week would work well. They also agreed on a one to two hour time frame per meeting.

- 2 - "I say two times a week yeah. (lots of agreement)
- 5 - How long? What kind of time?
- 2 - Like an hour or two.
- 9 - An hour and a half, two hours." (Focus Group 1, p. 21)

Furthermore, the homeless youth also recognized that their own accountability to the program is important and that they make a firm commitment to attend. In addition, the youth also thought that participants should not miss the program unless they have a valid excuse. Two respondents explained, "If you miss a session because oh shit, I had to work, I had appointments, or had to do this, or I had to do this, or sorry I couldn't be there because I was out doing this, you know like. 2 - But don't go to the movies, just to miss the group." (Focus Group 1, p. 35)

They also felt that there should be a minimum amount of time that all participants must participate in order to ensure that everyone gets something out of the program and that participants do not abuse the program.

4 – “Ah, maybe you should have some kind of guideline or something that you have to do, so people don’t abuse the program.

7 – You have to participate in so much, so many, so many times a week or something.” (Focus Group 2, p. 24)

A firm commitment to the program was seen as something that was important to the youth.

The youth did not talk about what they thought the length of the program should be, but they did think that they would continue on with the program even if they moved out of Cunningham Place. As many of the youth continue to receive services from Cunningham Place, it would be natural for them to continue to attend a program through Cunningham Place.

4 – “I would stay with it.

6 – I would too.

7 – Actually, I could probably answer that question really great because I no longer live here, but I still come back to get resources here.

1- Ok.

7 - Because they helped me out through my, the whole time I was living here.

6 - Two months later.

7- And, like, I still work with my counselor here. And, I’m constantly here. So, like even having a program like that here, it still, that gives the person more, more things to come back here for.” (response when asked if they would stick with the program even after they have moved out of Cunningham Place) (Focus Group 2, p. 22)

Overall, the homeless youth felt that they would be able to commit to this program if they thought that it was beneficial and enjoyable.

(4) Sub-Category: Orientation.

The homeless youth felt that no orientation is necessary for this program.

They thought that the students could learn directly from them and that the program would work best if the students and youth could just get together, meet each other and interact.

- 6 - "Nope we don't need no training, no.
 2 - Because if we go right into it, we're going to be educating the students.
 7 - No training." (Focus Group 1, p. 19)

4 - "I think it's best if we just all got put in a room and met each other and then...

7 - Go from there." (Focus Group 2, p. 15)

Although the majority of youth were opposed to orientation, there were a couple of youth who had suggestions around things that could take place during a orientation session. One respondent suggested that the students watch a video called "I Human". They explained, "Show people 'I Human'. You wanna see what it's like to live, to, to sit and watch like fifty sketchy, flaky people who all live on the streets, who have nothing. Who lost their sister's, lost their mother's and father's to drugs. Lost everybody, everything and everybody to drugs that they have and watch how they're surviving. Watch how they're living, like you know." (Focus Group 1, p. 7)

Another youth thought that students need orientation about the diversity of the homeless youth population so that they do not come into the program with misconceptions. Overall, the homeless youth did not feel that orientation is necessary for this program.

Category: Safety

(1) Sub-Category: Boundaries.

Although the homeless youth did not speak directly about boundary issues, they did make several comments that warrant attention. First, some of the youth joked a lot about meeting good looking girls through this program. When asked about whether or not they would be interested in this type of program one youth asked, "It depends, are the university students female?" (Focus Group 2, p. 3) Other

youth also made similar comments throughout both focus groups. In addition to potential issues that could arise around becoming involved with members of the opposite sex, several youth also talked about attending university parties with students.

"Before we join though, I think we should be invited to one of those parties. (laughter) We should get the low down." (Focus Group 2, p. 5)

Finally, some of the youth were also very open about talking about their lives and too much self-disclosure could be seen as a potential boundary issue that may arise. One youth said, "I don't care. I'll talk to you about anything. I'll tell you about my sex life if you want." (Focus Group 2, p. 12) Although the youth seemed to be joking about many of these issues, it could be important to ensure that boundaries are clearly outlined to ensure the safety of all participants.

(2) Sub-category: Potential Safety Issues and Maintaining Personal Safety.

In terms of potential safety issues, the homeless youth did not think that program participants would be unsafe. They did not think that violence or other safety issues would be an issue. As one youth explained, "We're not going to attack anybody or anything." (Focus Group 2, p. 15) Overall, they felt that the students would be safe in this program.

Although the youth did not see safety as a major issue, a couple of them did joke about potential problems that could arise if they took the students to places that they used to live.

(jokingly) "You know come down this dark, shady alley with me. Don't mind those dark, shady characters over by that dark, shady dumpster. They're not holding a dark, shady two-by-four, I swear." (laughter) (Focus Group 1, p. 7-8)

In addition, one youth joked about corrupting the students with their behavior. They said, "They can show us how to study and we can show them how to smoke drugs." (Focus Group 1, p. 12) Overall, safety issues were not brought up very often and when they were it was in a joking manner.

Methodological Issues and Limitations

Several methodological issues and limitations to this study were identified and are discussed in the following section.

Recruitment Challenge

In this study, recruitment of students was found to be the biggest challenge. As data collection took place during the summer months, there were fewer students than during the fall and winter semesters on the University of Alberta campus to recruit from. This resulted in smaller focus groups than was anticipated. Furthermore, the principal investigator was unable to recruit any Aboriginal students despite attempting to recruit students from courses where higher numbers of Aboriginal students usually exist.

Data Collection Issues

There were several concerns with regards to data collection. First of all, there was variance between the level of responses given during individual interviews with service providers. Some of the service providers were nervous and seemed to have little experience being interviewed, which affected their responses. Additionally, some respondents gave short responses despite the use of open-ended questions. Therefore, probing questions, that were both pre-planned and that emerged from the flow of the interview, were employed. The use of probing questions was effective in

7

eliciting more in-depth responses. Furthermore, several service providers had a difficult time responding to questions that required them to come up with ideas for new programming. Several respondents articulated that they would have found answering the questions easier if a basic outline for the program would have been in place. However, by rewording some of the questions, the service providers were able to think about program design and for the most part they were able to provide quality data.

Although the service providers had some difficulty when first asked questions that required them to articulate how they would design the program, this difficulty lends support to the use of focus groups with both students and homeless youth. The service providers all have training and have been involved with programming in one capacity or another, so they were able to produce ideas about program design on their own. This may not have been the case of either students or homeless youth if they would have been involved in individual interviews instead of focus groups because it is likely that they have had less experience with program design. The use of focus group interviews allowed respondents to build off of one another's ideas, which provided a lot of information that may not have emerged had individual interview been employed. The interaction within the groups stimulated participants to think beyond their own private thoughts, which is a benefit of using focus groups (Kleiber, 2004).

Although focus group interviews were effective in eliciting in-depth and varied responses, there may have been several issues due to the use of this data collection method. It is possible that some of the respondents were hesitant to

participate in the group discussion and therefore did not participate as fully as they could have. I observed that some participants looked like they wanted to say something but they did not have an opportunity because they were overpowered by other individuals. As a facilitator I tried to ensure that each person was able to voice his or her opinion, but may not have been successful all of the time. Additionally, respondents could have felt pressure to conform to the ideas of the more vocal participants. To decrease the likelihood that this occurred, the principal investigator encouraged participation by all respondents and was available to speak further with respondents after the focus groups had ended. Several of the quieter respondents stayed after the groups to voice their opinions. These discussions were included as data. For the most part, focus group interviews were effective in providing in-depth information that reflected the views of the respondents.

Audiotaping

Respondents did not seem concerned about the use of audiotaping during individual or focus group interviews. No one objected to being taped or declined to participate because of audiotaping. Prior to one of the focus groups, a homeless youth asked if they could rap into the recorder and then play it back to the group. This resulted in a lot of laughter and made respondents more comfortable with the use of audiotaping. Once the interviews commenced, the respondents were able to easily engage in the discussion about program design and were not distracted by audiotaping.

Conclusion

Overall, the data collection experience enabled me to design a program that

will serve to meet the needs of all of the key stakeholders. Throughout the process I found myself reinventing the program at every turn as I moved towards the final product. I fed off the excitement that was created by the homeless youth, I was forced to think critically about the program based on the input from students and I relished the expertise offered by the service providers. In addition, I shared my findings with the research team who offered further suggestions and helped to focus the program. Although I believe that I have much to learn as a researcher, I also feel that I took the time to really listen and to reflect on what I heard, which is an important first step.

Chapter V - Discussion

This study focused on designing a program that links university students and homeless youth in a supportive relationship. Therefore, the following section incorporates the findings to outline the actual program that will be implemented. The knowledge and experience of key stakeholders, including service providers, university students and homeless youth, were central to program development. The respondents gave direction to the program in that they shared what they thought would benefit them the most and offered many insights that ultimately led to the final version of the program (see Appendix D). Subsequently, respondents provided information that indicated that a shift was needed in terms of the basic program structure.

This chapter begins with an explanation of that shift, which involves movement away from mentorship towards cultural exchange. Then the actual program design is outlined, which is based primarily on the input from key stakeholders, the discussions held with the research team and relevant literature. This section provides a summary of the results collected and outlines some of the consistencies and inconsistencies found among the research groups in order to design a program that reflects the needs of the key stakeholders. Limitations of the research are presented in the section following the program design. To conclude, additional findings and future directions are discussed.

Rationale

Focus group and interview respondents in this research project supported the development of a program that links university students with homeless youth. They

felt that it would provide homeless youth and students with an opportunity to learn from each other and to support each other. Furthermore, respondents seemed excited and enthusiastic about the prospect of this type of program because it has the potential to foster positive experiences and meet the needs of both students and homeless youth. Although the respondents supported the program idea, they also contended that the program focus should be on a mutual exchange between program participants, instead of a one-way transfer of information from students to homeless youth. The homeless youth felt that they have a lot to contribute to a program such as this and did not want to feel like this program was about teaching them social skills. Likewise, the students did not want to mentor the homeless youth because they felt that they could learn a lot from the homeless youth and that the focus should be more on sharing experiences. Therefore, the focus of this program is on cultural exchange.

In addition, previous research with homeless youth in Canada has called for programming that gives street youth the opportunity to do something that will explore their talents and abilities and develop their skills in order to give them a sense of worth (Kidd, 2003). Furthermore, it is important reduce the negative stereotypes that are associated with homeless people and to educate the public about the lives of homeless youth and the realities that they face. This will enable the youth to feel less stigmatized and ultimately to get off of the streets (Kidd, 2003). This program aims to meet those needs and will draw on the strengths of both the students and the homeless youth.

Shift from Mentorship to Cultural Exchange

While the literature pointed to mentorship as one type of program that could meet the needs of homeless youth (de Anda, 2001; Terry, 1999), data collected from service providers, students and homeless youth clearly indicated that a shift was needed. In all of the interviews, respondents talked about how this program should offer equal benefits for both students and homeless youth. Furthermore, they also saw a need for this program to be based on a mutual exchange of participants' experiences and knowledge. Therefore, in designing the program, the focus shifted from a program that provides mentorship to homeless youth, to a cross-cultural exchange between the aforementioned groups.

Although generally used with international exchanges in education, the benefits of cross-cultural exchange remain salient for this program. As Michael Oliver explained in the preface to *Hello, World! On Canada, the World and Youth* (1996), "The more we can gain perspective by entering a little into other people's lives, rather than peering at them, the more likely we are to substitute understanding." Furthermore, research by Robertson & Webber (2000) showed that through cross-cultural exchange, prior assumptions can be scrutinized and many individuals come to the realization that they have the ability to make a difference, which leads to increased feelings of confidence and self-efficacy. By immersing oneself in a new culture, whether in the extreme form of travelling across continents or in a more subtle form of exploring a different area in a city, the benefits remain the same. The exchange "changes the social context and therefore one's relation to it, and this requires resorting goals, assumptions, and practices" (Lin & Schwartz, 2003, p.11).

Creating Cultural Exchange: Developing Program Goals

In order to develop a program that creates meaningful change for participants, it is important to establish overall program goals to direct the process (Scholtes, Joiner & Streibel, 1996). Data collected from respondents clearly indicated that the overarching goal of this program should be cultural exchange. They talked about making connections with people that they otherwise would not come into contact with and about expanding their knowledge about a different culture. Respondents also saw this program as an opportunity for students and homeless youth to learn from each other and to share their life experiences. Although no actual definition for cultural exchange was found in the literature, the goal was created based on input from the respondents, as well as from the research team. As a result, the overarching goal for this program is, "To provide homeless youth and university students with an opportunity to learn about each other's culture, with the intention of increasing understanding."

In addition to cultural exchange as the overarching goal, focus group and individual interview participants also indicated that several sub-goals would be beneficial for this program. Homeless youth talked about the need to establish a supportive relationship with someone that they trust through this program, as well as gaining a resource person. Service providers articulated the importance of having a goal that promotes engagement in new experiences that are outside of normal day-to-day activities. Homeless youth felt that the program should encourage students to come into contact with new environments that they otherwise would not experience. Furthermore, the research team and several service providers felt that the

development of skills such as communication, leadership and organizational skills could be incorporated. Finally, students saw an increase in knowledge and sensitivity in terms of understanding some of the issues that are faced by homeless youth as an important sub-goal. Based on the input from the respondents, several sub-goals were developed. They include:

1. To form a trusting relationship.
2. To share life experiences and gain knowledge through understanding someone else's life experience.
3. To develop interpersonal and life skills specific to each program participants needs, interests and strengths.
4. To try new experiences.

Besides overall program goals, respondents also felt that it was important for each participant to set individual goals. Although the overall program goals will guide the program, there is also room within the one-on-one sessions to work towards individual program goals. In terms of individual goal setting, students and the research team felt that the students could advocate for services that meet the needs of homeless youth. In addition, youth-student pairs could participate in activities that would help to increase self-esteem or self-confidence. Individual goals will be established during orientation and will be reevaluated on an on-going basis to ensure that each individual is benefiting from the program.

The importance of setting program goals was supported by the literature. The literature suggests that goals serve to guide the direction of the program, serve as a reference point in decision-making about program activities and stimulate action

(Ilsley & Niemi, 1981; Jaques, 2000; Schopler, Galinsky & Alicke, 1985). Therefore, goals will provide the focus for program development.

Program Structure

Focus

First and foremost, the respondents felt that in order to meet the aforementioned goals, the focus for the program must be on leisure. They felt that leisure activities would help to promote bonding and would facilitate the mixing between the groups so that cultural exchange can take place. Respondents believed that leisure activities would help program participants to stay committed because it would provide them with the opportunity to engage in fun and rewarding activities. Although the need to focus on leisure was prevalent across the groups, respondents also expressed that the activities in the program need to be meaningful and should encourage mutual learning. According to the service providers, improving life skills and increasing healthy behaviors for both students and homeless youth should not be done in a direct manner, but instead should be learned through experience.

Literature on experiential learning supports the insight of the respondents in that it suggests that important learning can take place through engaging in activities and reflecting on experiences (Beard & Wilson, 2002; Luckner & Nadler, 1997). This type of learning can take on many forms, including recreational or leisure activities, experimentation or play (Beard & Wilson, 2002). Furthermore, experiential learning leads to changes in knowledge, feelings, judgments and skills as a result of living through an event or a series of events (Chickering, 1976). Additionally, the power of experiential learning lies in that it allows learners to focus

on their key issues in different environments that enable them to think and learn (Beard & Wilson, 2002). These environments can be either natural or artificially constructed (Beard & Wilson, 2002). By encouraging program participants to try things that they would not do on their own and by leaving their safe, comfortable and predictable world to enter into uncomfortable new territory, participants will not only experience changes in their thoughts, attitudes and behaviors, but they may also find new directions and ultimately may find themselves (Luckner & Nadler, 1997).

Through the process of experiencing, reflecting and applying the acquired learning, true personal growth can occur (Beard & Wilson, 2002; Luckner & Nadler, 1997).

Organization

In terms of the overall structure of the program, service providers, students and homeless youth agreed that the program needs to involve both group activities and one-on-one interaction. Service providers felt strongly that the program should begin as a group activity to increase the comfort for all participants. Therefore, the program will start off in a group setting to allow participants to build rapport and to establish trust, then move into one-on-one interaction. In addition, respondents indicated that they wanted the program to move from highly structured group activities, to more flexible one-on-one activities. In keeping with the data collected from respondents, the first four groups will be structured with activities determined in advance (seen Appendix D: Part D: Session Outlines). After one month, program participants will be placed into pairs and will engage in one-on-one activities on alternate weeks. During one-on-one weeks, the individual pairing can decide which activities they will engage in. Although respondents indicated that one-on-one

interaction was important, they also felt that group activities should continue throughout the program. Consequently, groups will continue on alternate weeks where no one-on-one activities take place.

Based on a suggestion from the research team, each pairing will have the opportunity to organize and facilitate one group session, where the emphasis will be on sharing experiences and cultural exchange. By organizing and facilitating a session, a sense of ownership is conveyed, which gives participants a feeling of control over the program and the learning outcomes (Denise & Harris, 1989). Actual organization of the participant led activities should take place during session four and during one-on-one weeks with assistance from the facilitator as necessary. Finally, respondents indicated that the last session should be a party-like atmosphere where successes are acknowledged and celebrated. Therefore, the program will end with a closing celebration attended by all program participants on the last group activity night.

(1) Program Participants and Recruitment Strategies.

Due to concerns regarding safety from the service providers, only homeless youth who currently live at Cunningham Place or who are receiving services through HOMEward Integrated Support services will be eligible for this program. According to the service providers, it is important that the homeless youth have undergone an assessment with the project manager or another case worker to ensure that hardcore drug users and extremely violent youth do not become part of the program. Service providers felt that this will increase safety for all program participants. In terms of the actual recruitment of the homeless youth, service providers at Cunningham Place

felt that they could assist the program facilitator to encourage youth to join and to identify appropriate candidates. Therefore, the service providers at Cunningham Place need to be contacted to help with the recruitment process.

The research team made the decision that only University of Alberta students will be eligible to participate in this program. This decision was made because this program will be offered as part of an independent study at the University of Alberta and it would not be feasible to accept students from other post-secondary institutions in Edmonton at this time. Student focus group respondents expressed that students need not have prior experience with a homeless population to be a part of this program. An interest in the program, regardless of motivation for participation, should be the only pre-requisite for program participation. Therefore, the program will be open to any University of Alberta student who is interested.

In terms of recruitment, the literature supports face-to-face contact with prospective participants to determine eligibility, prior to program involvement (Brown, 1991). Therefore, the facilitator should work with service providers who have regular contact with homeless youth and should visit the sites where group members are located, in this case the University of Alberta and Cunningham Place. Personal contact has also been shown to increase the likelihood that prospective members will participate in a group, which lends further support for the facilitator to meet with prospective program participants (Brown, 1991).

(2) Size and Age.

Respondents did not express what they felt the group size should be for this program. Therefore, literature on small groups was reviewed to establish an

appropriate group size. According to Exley and Dennick (2004), it is important that groups are large enough to "expose individuals to a variety of alternative viewpoints that they had not previously considered" (p. 17). On the other hand, it is also important that the group size remains small enough so that each individual within the group can make contributions without feeling inhibited, lost or overwhelmed by the size of the group (Brandler & Roma, 1991). Although evidence has suggested that the optimal group size is between five and eight people, it has also been shown that good facilitation can extend that number upwards to ten or twelve (Jaques, 2000). Furthermore, a group of ten allows for enough membership to allow for absences if group participants are unable to attend (Brandler & Roman, 1991). Therefore, it was decided that the program would involve a maximum of ten participants in order to optimize activities and ensure that each participant feels comfortable engaging in group discussions. Age limits were decided based on the ethics proposal. Students and homeless youth must be between the ages of 18 and 30 to participate in the program.

(3) Length and Time

The total length of the program is four months with a once per week session, which takes place either in a group setting or in a one-on-one pairing. This decision was made based primarily on the responses from students, who said that they would only be able to commit to one session per week due to their busy schedules. In terms of the length of the program, students felt that they would be able to commit to an eight month program, but the homeless youth who were interviewed felt that eight months was a very long time. Therefore, a four-month program was decided upon.

This length of time seems more reasonable for the homeless youth and will fit within the university semester for students. In addition, since many of the respondents are employed, attend programs or go to school during the day, it is likely that the program participants will have similar commitments. Therefore, the program will take place on a weeknight and will last for approximately 2 hours to ensure that participants will be able to attend. Flexibility in terms of session times, places and length can be arranged by the facilitator if the need arises due to the chosen activities or the needs and wants of the program participants.

(4) Location.

Service providers felt that it is important for the program to commence at Cunningham Place in a group meeting room that is open only to program participants. They felt that this would be the most comfortable location for the homeless youth and would increase their likelihood of attending the beginning sessions. By starting at Cunningham Place, program participants will have the opportunity to get comfortable with one another in a safe environment before exploring other places. Respondents believed that it is important to establish rapport before the group chooses to meet at other locations. One suggestion from respondents for a future program location was to meet at the University of Alberta. As the program progresses, the location of group activities will depend on the activity itself, and should be flexible to accommodate the needs of program participants. Transportation to and from the activities was a concern that was brought up by both the students and the homeless youth. Therefore, transportation to and from group activities can be arranged through Native Counselling Services of Alberta if the location of the group is not easily

accessible to both students and homeless youth. As one-on-one activities will be determined by the pairing themselves, meeting locations could vary from week to week.

The literature supports careful consideration when choosing a location for a program. According to Brown (1991), having a facility that is convenient and comfortable for everyone is vital to the success of the program. Additionally, the room must be free from interruptions and private to allow participants to talk openly without fear of being overheard by others outside of the program (Haasl & Marnocha, 2000). Therefore, a meeting room in Cunningham Place will serve as the location for the first four weeks of the program.

(5) Roles

Although respondents felt that the roles of the students, homeless youth, service providers and facilitator should vary, they also thought that this program should involve a teaching and learning component for all program participants (see Appendix D: Part C). The teaching component of this program places an emphasis on the existing strengths of the program participants and allows them to develop useful skills, which is an area that has been called for in the literature (Kidd, 2003). In addition, respondents thought that engaging in and organizing activities that promote cultural exchange is a role that all program participants should take.

In terms of separate roles, the students saw themselves as taking on the role of an advocate and a support person for the homeless youth. The homeless youth said that their central role is to provide students with an eye opening experience. In addition, youth also felt that they could educate the students about their realities so that they

become more sensitive to the issues that homeless youth face. In terms of the role for the service providers, they thought that they could assist in screening potential participants, assist with orientation, foster a sense of excitement about the program with their clients and support the program facilitator and the program participants when necessary. Finally, respondents also discussed the role of the facilitator. They felt that the facilitator should provide leadership and organization to the program, recruit and screen potential participants, support program participants and keep the service providers informed about happenings within the program. Outlining the roles for program participants is important because an understanding of the various roles and relationships within the program structure can help the group work together effectively and reach the program goals (Scholtes et al., 1996).

Orientation

According to the data collected from students and service providers, orientation is necessary in order to overcome some of the barriers to the success of this program and to prepare program participants for what lies ahead. Although the homeless youth who were interviewed did not support orientation or training, the research team made the decision to incorporate orientation for all program participants to ensure that every participant is prepared for the program. Additionally, by providing orientation for all participants, everyone will enter into the program on an equal playing field. Therefore, orientation is a mandatory component for all students and youth and must be completed prior to program involvement. Although orientation will be mandatory, the actual components of the orientation will differ for students and homeless youth based on the needs of each group.

Providing orientation prior to program involvement is supported by the literature (Leigh, Gerrish & Gillespie, 1986; Pike, 1990). Orientation provides participants with needed skills and can help to demonstrate proper helping behaviors towards others (Brown, 1991; Leigh et al, 1986). Furthermore, orientations can serve to outline what is and what is not the responsibility of the participants, explain the importance of confidentiality and allow for the expression of personal beliefs. Finally orientation provides an opportunity to discuss and practice skills, to ask questions and to get to know one another (Pike, 1990). As a result, participants are more likely to remain satisfied and stable, which will ultimately contribute to the success of the program (Pike, 1990).

Although respondents discussed several necessary components of orientation, including background on homeless youth issues and cultural knowledge, information on addictions, relationship development, safety, mental health and goal setting, a detailed orientation has not been included (see Appendix D: Part B for additional components). Interview respondents and the research team identified many existing organizations in Edmonton, including Native Counselling Services of Alberta, AADAC and the RCMP, that have orientation sessions that are already designed and would be appropriate for this program. Therefore, the orientation should consist of bringing together the community resources to deliver the sessions rather than 'reinventing the wheel'.

According to the interview respondents, overcoming barriers is one of the key reasons that orientation is needed. In terms of the actual barriers that may arise in this program, respondents identified five key areas. They include:

- 1) A lack of understanding between the students and the homeless youth based on stereotypes, preconceived ideas and worldviews or ideology. Respondents felt that this lack of understanding could result in difficulties in establishing rapport between the two groups.
- 2) A difficulty in accepting or adapting to a new culture that is outside of the comfort zone for either students or homeless youth. Service providers suggested that some participants may feel that the groups are too far apart which could be intimidating. Furthermore, program participants may not know the rules or understand how to act in unfamiliar environments, which could cause anxiety.
- 3) A lack of commitment or follow-through by both students and homeless youth as a result of lack of motivation, transience, competing commitments or unclear expectations.
- 4) Logistical barriers including transportation issues and scheduling conflicts.
- 5) Addictions and other barriers including mental illness, FAS and learning disabilities, which may affect program participation or understanding.

Several of these same barriers have also been identified in the literature. Prior research on youth homelessness has shown that homeless youth do have higher rates of addiction and mental illness (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Ringwalt et al., 1998; Schweitzer & Hier, 1994; Votta & Manion, 2003; Whitbeck et al., 2000). In addition, research on drinking among university students has also shown that approximately 40% of college students are classified as binge drinkers (Wechsler et al., 2002). Therefore alcohol use could be a barrier for both students and homeless youth.

Additionally, a lack of understanding due to stereotyping is also a barrier that has been identified in the literature. In a large qualitative study involving eighty street youth in Canada, it was found that many street kids experience a wide range of socially oppressive and discriminatory actions by the general public (Kidd, 2004). Youth described the painful experience of being stereotyped as lazy and immoral, instead of being seen as individuals who have knowledge and talents to offer.

Similarly, many of the homeless youth who participated in the focus groups also held stereotypical views with regards to university students. These views stemmed mostly from popular culture. The homeless youth felt that they would not be able to relate to the students because all university students are wealthy and would look down on them. Therefore, stereotypes with reference to both homeless youth and students could be a potential barrier in this program.

Furthermore, the cultural differences between street culture and mainstream society are not often recognized, which could be a potential barrier in this program (Barry; Ensign & Lippek, 2002; Kidd, 2003). As Kidd (2004) explained, "even though most street youth have been born into and constantly exposed to North American culture, the differences of their experiences are substantial enough to suggest that they may have and use different meaning systems" (p. 52). Research by Barry et al. (2002) found that a culture of homeless youth exists and involves shared values, attitudes, beliefs, language, dress and a common way of life. This subculture is critically important in their ability to survive on the streets. As a result, a lack of understanding could result as product of the differences between the homeless youth culture and that of the students.

In addition, interview respondents felt that program participants could be hesitant or uncertain about this program because they:

- a. worry that they won't fit in with the group;
- b. fear that someone will try to change them;
- c. feel that they won't be able to relate; and
- d. don't feel prepared for some of the situations that may arise

This hesitation seemed to stem from prior personal experiences of the respondents.

Although service providers pointed out that not all barriers can be eliminated, orientation that involves open communication about the aforementioned issues is essential to reduce the likelihood that barriers will interfere with program participation or enjoyment. Therefore, orientation will serve to address some of the barriers by providing information and a chance for open discussion. Once program participants come to the realization that they share many of the same fears and apprehensions, many of the barriers will be reduced (Neill, 2004). Additionally, the facilitator will take an active role in helping the students and the homeless youth to deal with barriers and challenges throughout the program.

Program Sessions

Focus group and individual interview respondents provided many ideas for potential activities that could be incorporated into this program. They suggested things like drama, art, sports, field trips and games as possibilities. In addition, respondents thought that it was important to begin with a structured program and then allow participants to be involved in the decision making process in terms of program activities. Service providers also expressed that it is important to ensure that rapport

is established and trust is built from the beginning of the program so that relationships can develop.

Literature on group formation suggests that in the beginning, participants cautiously explore what is acceptable behavior in the group, begin to build trust and are excited about what lies ahead (Luckner & Nadler, 1997). In addition, forming can also include feelings of suspicion, fear and anxiety (Scholtes et al., 1996). Therefore, it is important that the beginning stages of group formation involve activities that help group members get to know one another, to provide clear direction, to develop plans for future groups and to establish ways of working together (Scholtes et al., 1996). Furthermore, giving the group choices and allowing them to take ownership of the process is an important step in group development. When allowing the group to have input into program activities, it is important to spell out the parameters, including the overall goals of the program, so that participants can take those things into consideration when they are making decisions about activities (Luckner & Nadler, 1997).

Based on the input from the respondents and the literature about group formation, it was decided that the first four weeks of the program would be structured (see Appendix D: Part D). Activities were adopted from books and web sites on multicultural learning, experiential learning and from personal experience with groups. The objectives of the beginning sessions are to form the group, develop relationships, begin the cultural exchange process and address stereotypes. After that point, program participants will take ownership of the program and will make decisions around future program activities.

Safety

Both students and service providers brought up safety concerns (see Appendix D: Part E). They were worried that unhealthy boundaries exhibited by both students and homeless youth could be an issue. They expressed issues such as crushes, parties, becoming too involved, lending money and engaging in illegal activities as potential problems. Based on personal experiences, the service provider's felt that a session regarding healthy boundaries must be mandatory for program participants. In addition, safety plans including a check-in system, public meetings, no use of identifying information and working alone guidelines were also seen as important parameters to have in place. Although the homeless youth who were interviewed did not report any concerns with regards to boundaries or safety, safety measures have been put into place for this program based on the input from service providers and students.

Although no literature was found regarding safety issues for a program that links university students with homeless youth, there is research regarding the safety of outreach workers and researchers who work with homeless populations. Research by Fisk, Rakfeld, Heffernan and Rowe (1999) found that boundary issues arise as workers moved out a controlled environment and into community settings. One of the main boundary issues that was raised was that of sexual boundaries, especially with regards to the opposite sex. Sexual comments and intrusive sexual behaviors were common and workers required training so that they were confident in their ability to set firm verbal limits. Another unhealthy boundary can result when workers are impacted emotionally by a homeless person and are tempted to cross boundaries

in order to provide some type of relief to the client. Examples of relief include providing transportation, purchasing goods and lending money. In addition, there is the risk of witnessing violence or becoming a victim of violence when work is being conducted in unfamiliar community settings (Ensign, 2003). Therefore, it is important for someone to be aware of activities, to always adhere to safety procedures and to be alert to potential risks to increase personal safety (Ensign, 2003; Fisk et al., 1999).

In order to address some of these issues, orientation will involve a session on safety, including healthy and unhealthy boundaries. Students and homeless youth will be required to have a safety plan during one-on-one activities and the facilitator will be available to program participants for debriefing whenever necessary. Furthermore, program participants have the right to refuse to participate in an activity if they feel unsafe. The facilitator will be responsible for ensuring that the physical and emotional safety of all participants is of utmost importance.

Limitations of the Study

This study represents findings from three key stakeholder groups. Perspectives from students outside of the University of Alberta, homeless youth not living in Cunningham Place and service providers from other agencies could also provide additional insight. However, since the purpose of this study was to design a program that will involve Cunningham Place residents (or HOMEward Integrated Support Services Clients) and University of Alberta students, it was decided that only key stakeholders for the proposed program would be interviewed. Therefore, the suggested program is only designed for use with these populations and further

research is necessary to generalize this program for use with other, similar populations.

Another limitation of this study was that the principal investigator directly recruited participants based on convenience. Potential participants, especially homeless youth, may have been intimidated by the principal investigator and therefore chose not to participate or were not available during times set out to complete the interviews. Further, it is possible that those who chose not to participate were more skeptical about the feasibility of the program and would have had more negative responses. Therefore, less support for the program may have emerged had different respondents been involved in data collection. Finally, no Aboriginal students were recruited, which may have altered the findings, as the worldviews with regards to teaching and learning of non-Aboriginal people may be different than those of Aboriginal students (Hewitt, 2000). Including an Aboriginal student's perspective would have strengthened program design.

The small number of potential respondents limited theoretical sampling. To minimize the time that each respondent had to commit to the research study, respondents were given the option as to whether or not they chose to engage in data verification. Informal meetings were arranged with respondents who wanted to look over the program manual and add their comments or additional ideas. In addition, the program manual was emailed to all respondents with email addresses and respondents were given the option to add comments electronically. By providing several options, the burden in terms of time commitment was reduced. The transient nature of the student and homeless populations and the heavy workload of service providers made

reaching all respondents difficult and therefore, not all respondents were able to verify the data.

Additional Findings and Future Directions

Although the main focus for this study was to design a program, several other findings emerged from the data that warrant further investigation. First, the homeless youth did not express any concerns in terms of safety with regards to this program. Even though several of the homeless youth had been in juvenile detention or jail because of violent behavior, they did not feel that violence would be a potential problem. Furthermore, when asked about boundaries, the homeless youth did not feel that they had unhealthy boundaries. On the other hand, service providers and students both discussed important safety considerations, especially with regards to boundaries. The service providers expressed that the youth who live at Cunningham Place often have complete disregard for other people's boundaries and are not even aware when they cross those boundaries. According to the service providers, they often enter into offices without knocking, easily develop crushes with workers and need to be spoken to assertively or they continue to push workers beyond their comfort zone. Limited research has been done with regards to boundaries and homeless youth. In one study it was found that outreach workers reported an increase in sexual comments and had to tolerate more intrusive sexual behaviors by the homeless when they worked in shelters and street settings (Fisk, Jaak, Heffernan & Rowe, 1999). Although this research points towards boundary issues, the issues may be different with the homeless youth population. The differences between the self-perceptions of the homeless youth and how others perceive them would be an

interesting area to study. Furthermore, research could involve exploring where healthy boundaries come from and why homeless youth often lack those boundaries. This could be done through further interviewing. In addition, direct observation of the homeless youth could shed light on the different perceptions of safety and boundaries, held by service providers, students and youth.

Stereotyping was another area where additional insight was gained. In this research, students did not overtly stereotype the homeless youth. They seemed very careful in the language that they used when speaking about the homeless and did not talk about homelessness as a personal fault or issue. On the other hand, several of the youth spoke of students in a stereotypical manner. Several youth assumed that all students are very wealthy and that students all have good relationships with their parents. The stereotypes that homeless youth hold about university students has not been explored in the literature. From discussions held with homeless youth both during focus groups and after the focus groups were complete, it seemed like a lot of the information that the youth get comes from television. Because the youth who live at Cunningham Place have access to televisions, they spend much of their free time watching, which could influence the stereotypes that they hold.

In addition, many of the homeless youth expressed that they have been treated poorly by the general public because of stereotypes. They felt that others have looked down on them and treated them like they were nothing because of the way that they look. A European study found that the images that the general public hold about homeless people are negative (Brandon, Khoo, Maglajlic & Abuel-Ealeh, 2000). They found that the public stigmatized the homeless as being dangerous, a source of

infectious disease and as people who will attack without warning. Research by Kidd (2003) also supported the notion that homeless youth are often looked down upon because of the stereotypes that classify homeless youth as lazy or worthless. The contradiction between how the students talked about the homeless youth and how the homeless youth have actually been treated would be an interesting area to investigate.

Future research could explore whether or not students hold stereotypical views of the homeless, but have learned not to express them. This research could be difficult, as the students may answer in a politically correct manner, but if a researcher was able to create an atmosphere where students felt safe to answer honestly, it could provide some very interesting information. Furthermore, the origin of the stereotypes that the homeless youth hold about students and the impact that these stereotypes have on how homeless youth think about education could be explored.

Future directions in terms of this research will include an evaluation of this program once it has been implemented. Because no literature was found that examines the linking of university students and homeless youth in a cultural exchange, the evaluation will serve as a starting point to assess the advantages and the disadvantages of this type of program. Furthermore, the evaluation will examine whether or not the goals of the program are being met and whether the students and the homeless youth are benefiting from the program. From there, future directions for this program will be decided.

Implications

The most important implication of this study is that it has served to design a program that will actually be implemented as a pilot project in Edmonton. Once the program has been implemented and evaluated it has the potential to not only broaden our understanding of some of the issues faced by homeless youth, but also to increase their quality of life. In terms of the human ecological perspective, this study highlights some of the differences that exist between two environments within the same city. These differences shape the very essence of who people are and how they live on a daily basis. Furthermore, the study illustrates how homeless youth and students perceive their environments as being very different. Although the environments are different, the intention of the program is to connect the two populations to work towards increased knowledge of some of the issues faced by both groups. By participating in this program, it is anticipated that the students and homeless youth will come to a better understanding of each other and will start to see the interconnectedness in the world around them. From this point, it is a matter of bringing two populations together in a supportive relationship to develop life skills and share experiences with the ultimate goal of increasing understanding.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to develop a program that links university students with homeless youth in a supportive relationship. Developing this program has involved input from key stakeholders, as well as contributions from the research team throughout the process. It is based on the data collected, personal reflection and many discussions that were held by the research team over time. The expertise and

insight from all involved in the research process has led to a program that moves research into a practical setting, where the outcome will serve to meet the needs of both homeless youth and university students. This research moves beyond description and into action, which adds a new dimension to the literature on homeless youth. As Sean Kidd (2003) so poignantly expressed,

A strong focus on street youth pathology exists with little attention paid to intervention and prevention efforts. Given the number of these children and young people dying on the streets of North America, it is difficult to justify for the amount of research that is purely descriptive which provides little if any direction for intervention (p. 257).

Therefore, this research served as a basis for the development of an intervention program that will not only help young people who are living on the street, but will also lead to increased understanding of the realities of homelessness for university students. This program aims to address the call from homeless youth in Edmonton for the development of programming that offers unconditional support that helps to meet their needs. By creating a program that draws on the inner strengths and the cultural competence of all participants, the potential for real change is created.

References

- Alibhai, A. (1996). *Understanding community participation in primary health care programs in the developing world*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton.
- Anderson, D. G., & Imle, M. A. (2001). Families of origin of homeless and never-homeless women. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 23(4), 394-413.
- Aquilino, W. S. (1991). Family structure and home-leaving: A further specification of the relationship. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53, 999-1010.
- Aquilino, W. S. (1997). From adolescent to young adult: A prospective study of parent-child relations during the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 59, 670-686.
- Avery, R., Goldscheider, F., & Speare Jr., A. (1992). Feathered nest/gilded cage: Parental income and leaving home in the transition to adulthood. *Demography*, 29(3), 375-388.
- Badir, D. (1993). Family as environment: An ecosystem perspective on family life. *Occasional Papers Series, No. 5*. Vienna, Austria: United Nations.
- Bailey, D. (1992). Using participatory research in community consortia development and evaluation: Lessons from the beginning of a story. *The American Sociologist*, 23(4), 71-82.
- Banyard, V. L., Williams, L. M., & Siegel, J. A. (2002). Retraumatization among

adult women sexually abused in childhood: Exploratory analyses in a prospective study. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 1(3), 19-48.

Bao, W.-N., Whitbeck, L. B., & Hoyt, D. R. (2000). Abuse, support, and depression among homeless and runaway adolescents. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 41, 408-420.

Baron, S. W. (1999). Street youths and substance use: The role of background, street lifestyle, and economic factors. *Youth & Society*, 31(1), 3-26.

Baron, S. W., & Hartnagel, T. F. (1998). Street youth and criminal violence. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 35(2), 166-192.

Barry, P. J., Ensign, J., & Lippek, S. H. (2002). Embracing street culture: Fitting health care into the lives of street youth. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 13(2), 145-152.

Beard, C., & Wilson, J. P. (2002). *The power of experiential learning: A handbook for trainers and educators*. London, UK: Kogan Page Limited.

Benson, R. (2004) *Life Map*. Retrieved September 8, 2004, from First Steps Training Web site:

www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/acrchive/activity_lifemap.htm

Blood, L., & D'Angelo, R. (1974). A progress research report on value issues in conflict between runaways and their parents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 36, 486-491.

- Brandler, S., & Roman, C. P. (1991). *Group work: Skills and strategies for effective interventions*. New York: NY: The Haworth Press.
- Brandon, D., Khoo, R., Maglajlic, R., & Abuel-Ealeh, M. (2000). European snapshot homeless survey: Results of questions asked by passers-by in 11 European cities. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 6, 39-45.
- Bronstein, L. R. (1996). Intervening with homeless youths: Direct practice without blaming the victim. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 13(2), 127-138.
- Brown, L. N. (1991). *Groups for growth and change*. White Plains, N.Y.: Longman Publishing Group.
- Brydon-Miller, M. (1997). Participatory action research: psychology and social change. *Journal of Social Issues*, 53(4), 657-666.
- Bubolz, M. M., & Sontag, M. S. Human ecology theory. In P.G. Boss, W.G. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W.R. Schumm, & S.K. Steinmetz (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methods: A contextual approach* (pp. 419-448). New York: Plenum.
- Casavant, L. (1999). *Composition of the Homeless Populations*. Parliamentary Research Branch.
- Charmaz, K. (1990). Discovering chronic illness: Using grounded theory. *Social Science and Medicine*, 30(11), 1161-1172.

- Charmaz, K. (2001). Grounded theory. In R. M. Emerson *Contemporary Field Research* (2nd ed.,). Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press .
- Chassin, L., Proessen, C. C., Sherman, S. J., & Edwards, D. A. (1992). The natural history of cigarette smoking and young adult social roles. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 33, 328-347.
- Chataway, C. J. (1997). An examination of the constraints on mutual inquiry in a participatory action research project. *Journal of Social Issues*, 53(4), 747-765.
- Chenier, N. M. (1999). *Health and Homelessness*. Parliamentary Research Branch.
- Chiang, V. C., Keatinge, D., & Williams, A. K. (2001). Challenges of recruiting a vulnerable population in a grounded theory study. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 3, 205-211.
- Chickering, A. W. (1976). Chapter 6: Developmental change as a major outcome. In M.T. Keelon (Ed.), *Experiential Learning: Rationale, Characteristics and Assessment* . San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Cleaver, F. (2001). Institutions, agency and the limitations of participatory approaches to development. *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (pp. 36-55). New York: Zed Books Ltd.
- Clemens, A. W., & Axelson, L. J. (1985). The not so empty-nest: The return of the fledgling adult. *Family Relations*, 34, 259-264.
- CMHC. (2001). *Environmental scan on youth homelessness*.

- Commander, M., Davis, A., McCabe, A., & Stanyer, A. (2002). A comparison of homeless and domiciled young people. *Journal of Mental Health, 11*(5), 557-564.
- Consalvo, C. (1996). *Changing pace: Outdoor games for experiential learning*. Amherst, MA: HRD Press, Inc.
- Cooke, B., & Kothari, U. (2001). The case for participation as tyranny. *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (pp. 1-15). New York: Zed Books.
- Cooney, T. M., & Mortimer, J. T. (1999). Family structure differences in the timing of leaving home: Exploring mediating factors. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 9*(4), 367-393.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology, 13*(1), 3-21.
- Cresswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Cutcliffe, J. R. (2000). Methodological issues in grounded theory. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 31*(6), 1476-1484.
- Davis, S. M., & Reid, R. (1999). Practicing participatory research in american indian communities. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 69*(4), 755-759S.
- de Anda, D. (2001). A qualitative evaluation of a mentor program for at-risk youth: The participants' perspective. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal,*

18(2), 97-117.

Denise, P. S., & Harris, I. M. (1989). *Experiential education for community development*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Devers, E., & Robinson, K. (2002). The making of a grounded theory: After death communication. *Death Studies*, 26, 241-253.

Dube, S. R., Felitti, V. J., Dong, M., Chapman, D. P., Giles, W. H., & Anda, R. F. (2003). Childhood abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction and the risk of illicit drug use: The adverse childhood experiences study. *Pediatrics*, 111(3), 564-572.

Duncan, T. E., Duncan, S. C., Hops, H., & Stoolmiller, M. (1995). An analysis of the relationship between parent and adolescent marijuana use via generalized estimating equation methodology. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 30(3), 317-339.

Ebaugh, H. R., & Curry, M. (2000). Fictive kin as social capital in new immigrant communities. *Sociological Perspectives*, 43(2), 189-209.

Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing . (2000).

Ensign, J. (2003). Ethical issues in qualitative health research with homeless youth. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 43(1), 43-50.

Exley, K., & Dennick, R. (2004). *Small group teaching: Tutorials, seminars and beyond*. New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

- Fals Borda, O. (2001). Participatory (action) research in social theory: Origins and challenges. In P. Reason, & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *Handbook of Action Research Participative Inquiry and Practice* (pp. 27-37). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Fisk, D., Rakfeldt, J., Heffernan, K., & Rowe, M. (1999). Outreach workers' experiences in a homeless outreach project: Issues of boundaries, ethics and staff safety. *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 70(3), 231-246.
- Fitzgerald, M. D. (1995). Homeless youths and the child welfare system: Implications for policy and service. *Child Welfare*, 74(3), 717-730.
- Garasky, S., Haurin, R. J., & Haurin, D. R. (2001). Group living decisions as youths transition to adulthood. *Journal of Population Economics*, 14, 329-349.
- Gibbon, M. (2002). Doing a doctorate using a participatory action research framework in the context of community health. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(4), 546-558.
- Gibson, N., & Gibson, G. Articulating the agendas: Negotiating a collaborative model for public health research. *Securing Northern Futures: Developing Research Partnerships*, O.P. #45 CCI Press, 109-114.
- Gibson, N., Gibson, G., & Macaulay, A. C. (2001). Community-based research: Negotiating agendas and evaluating outcomes. In J. Morse, J. Swanson, & A.J. Kuzel (Eds.), *The Nature of Qualitative Evidence*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Goebel, A. (1998). Process, perception and power: Notes from 'participatory' research in a zimbabwean resettlement area. *Development and Change*, 29, 277-305.
- Goldscheider, F. K., & Goldscheider, C. (1998). The effects of childhood family structure on leaving and returning home. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 745-756.
- Goldscheider, F. K., & Goldscheider, C. (1989). Family structure and conflict: Nest-leaving expectations of young adults and their parents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 51, 87-97.
- Greenwood, D. J., & Levin, M. (1998). An epistemological foundation for action research. *Introduction to Action Research Social Research for Social Change* (pp. 67-91). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Guinn, R. P. (2000). Passage of the foster care independence act of 1999: A pivotal step on behalf of youth aging out of foster care and into a life of poverty. *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy*, 7(2), 403-411.
- Haasl, B., & Marnocha, J. (2000). *Bereavement support group program for children* (2nd ed.). USA: Accelerated Development: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Hall, B. L. (1992). From margins to center? The development and purpose of participatory action research. *The American Sociologist*, 23(4), 15-28.

- Hall, B. L. (2001). I wish this were a poem of practices of participatory research. In P. Reason, & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research Participative Inquiry and Practice* (pp. 171-178). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Harkins, E. B. (1978). Effects of empty nest transitions on self report of psychological and physical well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 40, 549-556.
- Hartwell, S. (2003). Deviance over the life course: The case of homeless substance abusers. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 38(3), 475-502.
- Hebert, J. (1996). *Hello, world! On canada, the world and youth*. Montreal: Talonbooks.
- Hewitt, D. (2000). A clash of worldviews: Experiences from teaching Aboriginal students. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(2), 111-117.
- Hibbard, M. R., Cantor, J., Charatz, H., Rosenthal, R., Ashman, T., Gundersen, N. et al. (2002). Peer support in the community: Initial findings of a mentoring program for individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families. *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*, 17(2), 112-131.
- Ho, B. S. (2002). Application of participatory action research to family-school intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 31 (1), 106-121.
- Holmstrom, L. L., Karp, D. A., & Gray, P. S. (2002). Why laundry, not hegel? Social

- class, transition to college, and pathways to adulthood. *Symbolic Interactions*, 25(4), 437-462.
- Hurley, L. P., & Lustbader, L. L. (1997). Project support: Engaging children and families in the educational process. *Adolescence*, 32(127), 523-531.
- Ilsley, P. J., & Niemi, J. A. (1981). *Recruiting and training volunteers*. New York, USA: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Israel, B. A., Schulz, A. J., Parker, E. A., & Becker, A. B. (1998). Review of community-based research: Assessing partnership approaches to improve public health. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 19(1), 173-202.
- Jackson-Wilson, A. G., & Borgers, S. B. (1993). Disaffiliation revisited: A comparison of homeless and nonhomeless women's perceptions of family of origin and social supports. *Sex Roles*, 27(7), 361-377.
- Jainchill, N., Hawke, J., & Yagelka, J. (2000). Gender, psychopathology, and patterns of homelessness among clients in shelter-based tcs. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 26(4), 553-567.
- Jaques, D. (2000). *Learning in groups: A handbook for improving group work* (3rd ed.). London: Kogan Page.
- Karner, T. X. (1998). Professional caring: Homecare workers as fictive kin. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 12(1), 69-82.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2000). Participatory action research. In Y. S. L. N.K.

Denzin (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.,). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kidd, S. A. (2003). Street youth: Coping and interventions. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 20(4), 235-261.

Kidd, S. A. (2004). "The walls were coming in, and we were trapped" A qualitative analysis of street youth suicide. *Youth & Society*, 36(1), 30-55.

Kipke, M. D., Palmer, R. F., LaFrance, S., & O'Connor, S. (1997). Homeless youths' descriptions of their parents' child-rearing practices. *Youth & Society*, 28(4), 415-431.

Kipke, M. D., & Unger, J. B. (1997). Street youth, their peer group affiliation and differences according to residential status, subsistence patterns, and use of services. *Adolescence*, 32(127), 655-669.

Kleiber, P. B. (2004). Focus Groups: More Than a Method of Qualitative Inquiry. In K. deMarrais, & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for Research: Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences* (pp. 91-102). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Koch, T., Selim, P., & Kralik, D. (2002). Enhancing lives through the development of a community-based participatory action research programme. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 11(1), 109-117.

Kothari, U. (2001). Power, knowledge and social control in participatory

development. *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (pp. 139-167). New York: Zed Books.

Lan, P.-C. (2002). Subcontracting filial piety: Elder care in ethnic chinese immigrant families in california. *Journal of Family Issues*, 23(7), 812-835.

Leigh, G., Gerrish, R., & Gillespie, E. (1986). *Why volunteers?: Selecting, training and deploying volunteers in alcohol treatment services*. Toronto, Can.: Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Research Foundation .

Lin, X., & Schwartz, D. L. (2003). Reflections at the crossroads of cultures. *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 10(1), 9-25.

Lipson, J. (1991). The use of self in ethnographic research. In J.M. Morse (Ed.), *Qualitative Nursing Research: A Contemporary Dialogue* (pp. pp. 73-89). London: Sage.

Luckner, J. L., & Nadler, R. S. (1997). *Processing the experience: Strategies to enhance and generalize learning* (2nd ed.). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Mac Rae, H. (1992). Fictive kin as a component of the social networks of older people. *Research on Aging*, 14(2), 226-245.

Macaulay, A. C., & Commanda, L. E. (1999). Participatory research maximizes community and lay involvement. *British Medical Journal*, 319(7212), 774-778.

- Maguire, P. (1987). *Doing Participatory Research: a feminist approach*.
Massachusetts: The Center for International Education.
- Malone, R. E. (1998). Ethical issues in publication of research. *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, 24(3), 281-281.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1999). *Designing Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.).
Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Mason, J. (1999). *Qualitative Researching*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Mason, R., & Boutilier, M. (1996). The challenge of genuine power sharing in
participatory action research: The gap between theory and practice. *Canadian
Journal of Community Mental Health*, 15(2), 145-152 .
- McCann, T., & Clark, E. (2003). Grounded theory in nursing research: Part 1 - 3.
Researcher, 11(2), 7-39.
- McCarthy, B., Hagan, J., & Martin, M. J. (2002). In and out of harm's way: Violent
victimization and the social capital of fictive street families. *Criminology*,
40(4), 831-865.
- McCaskill, P. A., Toro, P. A., & Wolfe, S. M. (1998). Homeless and matched housed
adolescents: A comparative study of psychopathology. *Journal of Clinical
Child Psychology*, 27(3), 306-319.
- Mellion, L., & Tovin, M. (2002). Grounded theory: A qualitative research
methodology for physical therapy. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice*, 18,

109-120.

- Meyer, J. (2000). Using qualitative methods in health related action research. In C. Pope, & N. Mays (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Health Care* (2nd ed., Vol. 320). BMJ Books.
- Minkler, M. (2000). Using participatory action research to build healthy communities. *Public Health Reports*, 115, 194-197.
- Mitchell, B. A. (1994). Family structure and leaving the nest: A social resource perspective. *Sociological Perspectives*, 37(4), 651-671.
- Mitchell, B. A., Wister, A. V., & Burch, T. K. (1989). The family environment and leaving the parental home. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 51, 605-613.
- Morse, J. M. (1991). Strategies for sampling. In J.M. Morse (Ed.), *Qualitative Nursing Research* (2nd ed., pp. 127-145). Newbury Park: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Mounier, C., & Andujo, E. (2003). Defensive functioning of homeless youth in relation to experiences of child maltreatment and cumulative victimization. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 27, 1187-1204.
- Munro, B., LaBoucane-Benson, P., & Benson, K. (2003). *Youth Homelessness Survey*.
- Nagai, Y. (1999). Research partnerships with local people. *Convergence*, 32(1), 18-31.

Neill, J. (2004). *Fear in a hat: Description of a group interpersonal understanding exercise*. Retrieved September 20, 2004, from Wilderdom Experiential

Learning Web site:

<http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/FearInAHat.html>

Neill, J. (2004) *The Story of my Name*. Retrieved September 5, 2004, from

Wilderdom

Experiential Learning Web site:

www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/NameStory.html.

Neugarten, B. L. (1976). Adaptation and the life cycle. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 6(1), 16-20.

Nichols, M. (1984). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods*. New York: Gardner Press.

Novac, S., Serge, L., Eberle, M., & Brown, J. (2002). *Young homeless women in edmonton*. Status of Women Canada.

Nyamathi, A., Longshore, D., Keenan, C., Lesser, J., & Leake, B. D. (2001). Childhood predictors of daily substance use among homeless women of different ethnicities. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 45(1), 35-50.

Orona, C. J. (1990). Temporality and identity loss due to alzheimer's disease. *Social Science and Medicine*, 10, 1247-1256.

Ortiz, L. M. (2003). Toward authentic participatory research in health: A literature

review. *Pimatziwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health*, 1(2), 1-26.

Palys, T. (1997). *Research Decisions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives* (2nd ed.). Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada.

Paradise, M., Cauce, A. M., Ginzler, J., Wert, S., Wruck, K., & Brooker, M. (2001). The role of relationships in developmental trajectories of homeless and runaway youth. *Personal Relationships Implications for Clinical and Community Psychology* (pp. 159-179). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Parkes, M., & Panelli, R. (2001). Integrating catchment ecosystems and community health: The value of participatory action research. *Ecosystem Health*, 7(2), 85-105.

Pedersen, P.D. & Hernandez

Penzerro, R.-M. (2003). Drift as adaptation: Foster care and homeless careers. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 32(4), 229-245.

Pike, S. (1990). *Stronger together: Recruiting and working with ethnocultural volunteers*. Ottawa, Ont.: Central Volunteer Bureau of Ottawa-Carleton: Action Directorate, Multi-Culturalism and Citizenship Canada.

Piliavin, I., Sosin, M., Westerfelt, A. H., & Matsueda, R. L. (1993). The duration of homeless careers: An exploratory study. *Social Service Review*, 67(4), 576-598.

- Reardon, K. M. (1998). Participatory action research as service learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 73, 57-64.
- Reganick, K. A. (1997). Prognosis for homeless children and adolescents. *Childhood Education*, 73(3), 133-135.
- Rew, L. (2002). Relationships of sexual abuse, connectedness, and loneliness to perceived well-being in homeless youth. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 7(2), 51-63.
- Rew, L., & Horner, S. D. (2003). Personal strengths of homeless adolescents living in a high-risk environment. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 26(2), 90-101.
- Rew, L., Taylor-Sechafer, M., & Fitzgerald, M. L. (2001). Sexual abuse, alcohol and other drug use, and suicidal behaviors in homeless adolescents. *Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing*, 24, 225-240.
- Ringwalt, C. L., Greene, J. M., & Robertson, M. J. (1998). Familial background and risk behaviors of youth with throwaway experiences. *Journal of Adolescence*, 21, 241-252.
- Robertson, J. M., & Webber, C. F. (2000). Cross-cultural leadership development. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 3(4), 315-330.
- Royse, D. (1998). Mentoring high-risk minority youth: Evaluation of the brothers project. *Adolescence*, 33(129), 145-158.
- Ryan, K. D., Kilmer, R. P., Cauce, A. M., Wantanabe, H., & Hoyt, D. R. (2000).

- Psychological consequences of child maltreatment in homeless adolescents: Untangling the unique effects of maltreatment and family environment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24(3), 333-352.
- Salzman, M. (2000). Promoting multicultural competence: A cross-cultural mentorship project. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*, 28(2), 119-124.
- Scholtes, P. R., Joiner, B. L., & Streibel, B. J. (1996). *The team handbook* (2nd ed.). Madison, USA: Joiner Associates Inc.
- Schopler, J. H., Galinsky, M. J., & Alicke, M. D. (1985). Goals in social group work practice: Formulation, implementation, and evaluation. In M. Sundel, P. Glasser, R. Sarri, & R. Vinter (Eds.), *Individual Change Through Small Groups* (2nd ed., pp. 140-158). New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Schroeder, K. (1997). Participatory action research in a traditional academic setting: Lessons from the canada-asia partnership. *Convergence*, 30(4), 41-49.
- Schweitzer, R. D., & Hier, S. J. (1994). Parental bonding, family systems, and environmental predictors of adolescent homelessness. *Journal of Emotional & Behavioral Disorders*, 2(1), 39-45.
- Simons, R. L., & Whitbeck, L. B. (1991). Sexual abuse as a precursor to prostitution and victimization among adolescent and adult homeless women. *Journal of Family Issues*, 12(3), 361-379.

- Smart, R. G., & Adlaf, E. M. (1991). Substance use and problems among toronto street youth. *British Journal of Addicition*, 86, 999-1010.
- Social Support Research Program. (2004). University of Alberta:
- Stein, J. A., Leslie, M. B., & Nyamathi, A. (2002). Relative contributions of parental substance use and childhood maltreatment to chronic homelessness, depression, and substance abuse problems among homeless women: Mediating roles of self-esteem and abuse in adulthood. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26, 1011-1027.
- Stein, J. A., Newcomb, M. C., & Bentler, P. M. (1993). Differential effects of parent and grandparent drug use on behavior problems of male and female children. *Developmental Psychology*, 29(1), 31-43.
- Stephen, D. E. (2000). Young women construct themselves: Social identity, self-concept and psychosocial well-being in homeless facilities. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 3(4), 445-460.
- Stoecker, R. (2002). Practices and challenges of community-based research. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 6, 219-239.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Targ, D. B. (1979). Toward a reassessment of women's experience at middle age. *The*

Family Coordinator, 28(3), 377-382.

Tavecchi, L. W. C., & Thomeer, M. A. E. (1999). Attachment, social network and homelessness in young people. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 27(3), 247-262.

Tavecchio, L. W. C., Stams, G. J. J. M., Brugman, D., & Thomeer-Bouwens, M. A. E. (1999). Moral judgement and delinquency in homeless youth. 28(1), 74-77.

Terry, J. (1999). A community/school mentoring program for elementary students. *Professional School Counseling*, 2(3), 237-240 .

Thompson, S. J., Safyer, A. W., & Pollio, D. E. (2001). Differences and predictors of family reunification among subgroups of runaway youths using shelter services. *Social Work Research*, 25(3), 163-172.

Tripp, D. H. (1990). Socially critical action research. *Theory Into Practice*, 14(3), 158-166.

Tyler, K. A., & Cauce, A. M. (2002). Perpetrators of early physical and sexual abuse among homeless and runaway adolescents. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26, 1261-1274.

Tyler, K. A., Hoyt, D. R., Whitbeck, L. B., & Cauce, A. M. (2001). The impact of childhood sexual abuse on later victimization among runaway youth. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 11(2), 151-176.

- Ulichny, P. (1997). When critical ethnography and action collide. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(2), 139-168.
- Van Maanen, J. (1983). Reclaiming qualitative methods for organizational research: a preface. In J. Van Maanen (Ed.), *Qualitative Methodology*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- van Wormer, R. (2003). Homeless youth seeking assistance: A research-based study from deluth, minnesota. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 32(2), 89-102.
- Votta, E., & Manion, I. G. (2003). Factors in the psychological adjustment of homeless adolescent males: The role of coping style. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 42(7), 778-785.
- Wechsler, H., Lee, J. E., Kuo, M., Seibring, M., Nelson, T. F., & Lee, H. (2002). Trends in college binge drinking during a period of increased prevention efforts. *Journal of American College Health*, 50(5), 203-218.
- Weijer, C., Goldsand, G., & Emanuel, E. J. (1999). Protecting communities in research: Current guidelines and limits of extrapolation. *Nature Genetics*, 23, 275-280.
- Westhues, A., Clarke, L., Watton, J., & St. Claire-Smith, S. (2001). Building positive relationships: An evaluation of process and outcomes in a big sister program. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 21 (4), 477-493.
- Whitbeck, L. B., Hoyt, D. R., & Bao, W.-N. (2000). Depressive symptoms and co-

occurring depressive symptoms, substance abuse, and conduct problems among runaway and homeless adolescents. *Child Development*, 71(3), 721-732.

Whitbeck, L. B., Hoyt, D. R., Yoder, K. A., Cauce, A. M., & Paradise, M. (2001).

Deviant behavior and victimization among homeless and runaway adolescents. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 16(11), 1175-1204.

White, L., & Lacy, N. (1997). The effects of age at home leaving and pathways from home on educational attainment. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 59, 982-995.

Williams, N. R., Lindsey, E. W., Kurtz, D., & Jarvis, S. (2001). From trauma to resiliency: Lessons from former runaway and homeless youth. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 4(2), 233-253.

Wolfe, S. M., Toro, P. A., & McCaskill, P. A. (1999). A comparison of homeless and matched housed adolescents on family environment variables. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 9(1), 53-66.

Yancey, A. K. (1998). Building positive self-image in adolescents foster care: The use of role models in an interactive group approach. *Adolescence*, 33(130), 253-267.

Yancey, A. K., Siegel, J. M., & McDaniel, K. L. (2002). Role models, ethnic identity, and health-risk behaviors in urban adolescents. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 156(1), 55-61.

Yoder, K. A., Whitbeck, L. B., & Hoyt, D. R. (2003). Gang involvement and membership among homeless and runaway youth. *Youth & Society*, 34(4), 441-467.

Zhao, J. Z., Rajulton, F., & Ravanera, Z. R. (1995). Leaving parental homes in canada: Effects of family structure, gender, and culture. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 20(1), 31-50.

Appendix A - Interview Questions

Service Provider Interview Questions

- 1) How many homeless youth between the ages of 18-30 years does your agency work with?
- 2) What do you think are the main challenges that homeless youth in your agency face? What strengths do they possess to overcome these challenges?
- 3) Do the experiences of Aboriginal homeless youth differ from the experiences of other homeless youth? If yes, in what way?
- 4) What services does your agency provide for homeless youth? (Do programs include the cultural needs of specific groups – i.e. Aboriginal groups?)
- 5) Do you currently provide any programs that link university students to homeless youth? If yes, please describe.
- 6) If not, how would you go about implementing a program, as describe above, within your organization?
- 7) What benefits would you see from pairing university students with homeless youth?
- 8) What barriers do you perceive?
- 9) What role would the students/worker/homeless youth have within the program?
- 10) What kinds of training or expertise do staff/case workers have to work with homeless youth?
- 11) What training do you think the students would need to work with this population?
- 12) Of the services currently in place, which ones do you think help homeless youth the most? Why?
- 13) How do you measure the success of these programs or services? What outcomes do you look for? (Long-term successes versus short-term outcomes)
- 14) How do you see program evaluation fitting into a mentorship program? What outcomes would you look for? How would success be measured?
- 15) What would be the best evaluation method for your work situation (i.e. time; structure; simplicity; organization)?

- 16) What are barriers to evaluation when working with homeless youth?
- 17) How can evaluation methods be improved?
- 18) Are there changes that you would make to services offered to youth in your area?
- 19) Are there things that keep homeless youth from accessing services? If so, what are those factors?
- 20) Is there anything else you would like to add?
- 21) (Ask this question if homeless youth, students or service providers are very against having a confidant.) If you would not like a confidant or if you don't think that the link between university students and homeless youth is the right linkage, what type of program would you like to see implemented? How would it work? Why is it important? How would you know if it was working?

Student Focus Group Questions

- 1) Have you ever worked with homeless youth, or been a part of a programs which links university students to homeless youth? If yes, please describe.
- 2) If not, what are your thoughts about such a program? Would this interest you?
- 3) What benefits would you see from pairing university students with homeless youth?
- 4) What barriers do you perceive?
- 5) What role should the students have within the program?
- 6) What training do you think the students would need to work with this population?
- 7) How could student performance be evaluated (i.e. self-evaluation, evaluation by the program coordinator, etc)?
- 8) What outcomes would be important to consider when evaluating student performance (i.e. increased knowledge of homeless issues, increased empathy for homeless youth, etc)?
- 9) How could learning be assessed (i.e. journal writing, written assignments, tests, etc)?

- 10) What program are you currently in?
- 11) Does your program offer a practicum or co-op placement?
- 12) (Ask this question if homeless youth, students or service providers are very against having a confidant.) If you would not like a confidant or if you don't think that the link between university students and homeless youth is the right linkage, what type of program would you like to see implemented? How would it work? Why is it important? How would you know if it was working?

Homeless Youth Focus Group Questions

- 1) What is it like to be homeless?
- 2) What things are important to you when you are homeless?
- 3) Are there things that would have been helpful to you when you were homeless?
- 4) What is it like to live at Cunningham Place?
- 5) Do you participate in any programs at Cunningham Place? If so, which ones? If not, how come?
- 6) Have you ever had someone you can trust who is willing to work with you to find answers to problems or questions, someone who is a confidant? How do they help you?
- 7) If not, would you be interested in having a confidant?
- 8) What would be some good things about having a confidant?
- 9) What would be some bad things about having a confidant?
- 10) How could a confidant help you right now? How could you help a confidant?
- 11) What types of things would you like a confidant to do?
- 12) What would a program of that type be like? Who would run it? Who would be part of it?
- 13) How much time would you like to spend with that person?
- 14) How would I know if the confidant was helping you or if you were helping your confidant?

- 15) Is there anything else that you think researchers should know about you or your life before they begin the program?
- 16) (Ask this question if homeless youth, students or service providers are very against having a confidant.) If you would not like a confidant or if you don't think that the link between university students and homeless youth is the right linkage, what type of program would you like to see implemented? How would it work? Why is it important? How would you know if it was working?

will not be used. While efforts will be made to ensure confidentiality, you should be aware that the possibility of others recognizing a quote as yours does exist. You have up to one week after the interview to withdraw any information that you have given us and it will not be part of the final report or of any papers that are written or presented. All data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet that only researchers, research assistants, future research assistants, graduate students and the coordinator will have access to the information that you give us.

While you may not benefit directly from the study, you will make important contributions that will help to formulate a program design and evaluation tool that is reflective of the needs of case workers and students. We will, however, provide you with a summary of this research. We would be happy to answer any questions that you have.

hear what you are saying and you should know that they could share that information with others. All of the information you share with me will be kept in a locked filing cabinet that only researchers, research assistants, future research assistants, graduate students and the coordinator will have access to the information that you give us.

We hope that the time you spend in the focus group will be enjoyable, and that it will give you a chance to share your ideas. Do you have any questions?

for presentations to community groups and professionals and for graduate student theses now and in the future but your name will not be used. You do need to know that others in the group will hear your ideas and these ideas and your name could be shared with other people. All of the information you share with me will be kept in a locked filing cabinet that only researchers, research assistants, future research assistants, graduate students and the coordinator will have access to the information that you give us.

We hope that the time you spend in the group will give you a chance to share your ideas. Do you have any questions?

Appendix C – Informed Consent Forms

Service Provider Informed Consent Form

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Have you read and received a copy of the attached Information Sheet?	Yes	No
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?	Yes	No
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you are free to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you have up to one week after the group discussion to withdraw any information that you have given us and it will not be part of the final report or any papers that are written or presented?	Yes	No
Are you aware that your agency or program department may be named if permission is granted by the CEO or department director?	Yes	No
Do you know that you can stop information from being used?	Yes	No
Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you?	Yes	No
Do you know that you only have to answer the questions that you want to answer?	Yes	No
Do you understand that the interview will be audio taped and then put into written form?	Yes	No
Do you know that only researchers, research assistants, future research assistants, graduate students and the coordinator will have access to the information that you give us now and in the future?	Yes	No
I consent to the use of data, including direct quotes, for the purposes described in the information sheet.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of data for future purposes such as program development, for presentations to community groups and professionals and for graduate student theses, but your name will not be used.	Yes	No
Do you realize that quotes from the interview may be used in future research and publications?	Yes	No

This study was explained to me by: _____

I agree to participate in this study.

Yes No

Signature of the Research Participant

Date

Printed Name

Signature of the Investigator or Designee

Date

Student Informed Consent Form

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Do you understand what the study is about?	Yes	No
Did you read the information sheet?	Yes	No
Do you understand the risks of the study?	Yes	No
Have you had a chance to ask questions about this study?	Yes	No
Do you know that you only have to answer the questions that you want to answer?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you have up to one week after the group discussion to withdraw any information that you have given us and it will not be part of the final report or any papers that are written or presented?	Yes	No
Do you understand that the focus group will be audio taped and then put into written form?	Yes	No
Do you know that others in the group will hear what you are saying and may share that information with others?	Yes	No
Do you know that your name will not be used or shared with anyone else?	Yes	No
Do you know that only researchers, research assistants, future research assistants, graduate students and the coordinator will have access to the information that you give us now and in the future?	Yes	No
Do you know that you can quit at anytime?	Yes	No
Do you know that you don't have to answer all of the questions?	Yes	No
Do you understand that information you give could be used for other research?	Yes	No
This study was explained to me by: _____		
I agree to participate in this study.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of data, including direct quotes, for the purposes described in the information sheet.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of data for future purposes such as program	Yes	No

development, for presentations to community groups and professionals and for graduate student theses, but your name will not be used.

Signature of the Research Participant

Date

Printed Name

Signature of the Investigator or Designee

Date

Homeless Youth Informed Consent Form

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Do you understand what the study is about?	Yes	No
Did the research assistant read the information sheet to you?	Yes	No
Do you understand the risks of the study?	Yes	No
Have you had a chance to ask questions about this study?	Yes	No
Do you know that you can drop out of the study whenever you want and you don't have to answer all of the questions if you don't want to?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you have up to one week after the group discussion to withdraw any information that you have given us and it will not be part of the final report or any papers that are written or presented?	Yes	No
Do you understand that the focus group will be audio taped and then put into written form?	Yes	No
Do you know that only researchers, research assistants, future research assistants, graduate students and the coordinator will have access to the information that you give us now and in the future?	Yes	No
Do you know that others in the group will hear what you are saying and may share that information with others?	Yes	No
Do you know that you can quit at anytime?	Yes	No
Do you know that you don't have to answer all of the questions?	Yes	No
Do you understand that information you give could be used for other research?	Yes	No
This study was explained to me by: _____		
I agree to participate in this study.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of data, including direct quotes, for the purposes described in the information sheet.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of data for future purposes such as program development, for presentations to community groups and professionals	Yes	No

and for graduate student theses, but your name will not be used.

Signature of the Research Participant

Date

Printed Name

Signature of the Investigator or Designee

Date

Appendix D – Program Manual

Part A: Structure

-----1. Introduction-----

This manual presents the format for establishing and conducting a cultural exchange between university students and homeless youth in Edmonton, Alberta. The four-month program is designed for youth between the ages of 18 and 30 who are residents of Cunningham Place, HOMEward Integrated Support Services clients and University of Alberta students. This program is to be run as a pilot and then evaluated. From that point, future directions for this program will be decided.

The information in this manual is based primarily on interviews and focus groups that were conducted with service providers, students and homeless youth. In addition, relevant literature and suggestions from a larger research team contributed to the program design. This manual contains information on program goals, establishing the group, orientation, safety and suggestions for potential activities. The guidelines in this manual offer a starting point from which the facilitator can expand to meet the individual needs of program participants.

In brief, the steps to this program include:

- Step 1: Recruit participants
- Step 2: Orientation for students and homeless youth (week 1)
- Step 3: Group sessions run by the program facilitator as outlined in Part D (weeks 2-5)
- Step 4: Alternate between weekly one-on-one activities and participant-led group activities (weeks 6 – 15)
 - One-on-one activities: to be determined by individual pairings based on individual needs and interests
 - On-going group activities: to be organized and facilitated by program participants with assistance from the group facilitator (focus on cultural exchange)
- Step 5: Finish the program with a closing celebration organized and run by the program facilitator (week 16)

Each step will be outlined in further detail throughout this manual.

-----2. Rationale-----

Focus group and interview respondents in this research project supported the development of a program that links university students with homeless youth. Although the respondents supported the program idea, they also expressed that the program focus should be on a mutual exchange between program participants, instead

of a one-way transfer of information from students to homeless youth. Therefore, the focus of this program is on cultural exchange (see Part C).

-----3. Goals-----

This program consists of one overarching goal with several sub-goals.

Cultural Exchange:

To provide homeless youth and university students with an opportunity to learn about each other's culture, with the intention of increasing understanding.

5. To form a trusting relationship.
6. To share your life experiences and gain knowledge through understanding someone else's life experience.
7. To develop interpersonal and life skills specific to each program participants needs.
8. To try new experiences.

-----4. Establishing the Group-----

The service providers at Cunningham Place will be a valuable asset to this program because of their experience in working with the homeless youth population. Therefore, it is important to connect with the service providers at Cunningham Place, prior to organizing the groups, so that they can assist with the recruitment and screening of potential participants.

Recruitment

Potential participants include:

- a) Residents of Cunningham Place
- b) Clients of HOMEward Integrated Support Services
- c) Students from the University of Alberta

In order to recruit homeless youth, the service providers at Cunningham Place need to be contacted to suggest possible candidates. It is important that the homeless youth are receiving services and have undergone an assessment with the project manager or another service provider before being accepted into the program. This will increase safety for all program participants. Additionally, developing a poster that can be placed somewhere visible in Cunningham Place would be useful in making residents and clients aware of the program. The poster should include information about the program and the facilitator's contact information. Length of homelessness or

length that the homeless youth has been receiving services should not be a deciding factor in their recruitment or program involvement.

This program will be offered as an independent study for University of Alberta students. Recruitment of University of Alberta students could be done through presentations in courses, mass emails and poster presentations. Through each of these initiatives, the independent study will be explained and contact information provided. It is important to explain to students that the program will provide them with an opportunity to gain valuable experience in understanding youth homelessness and course credit through independent study. Students need not have prior experience with a homeless population to be a part of this program. An interest in the program, regardless of motivation for participation, should be the only pre-requisite for program participation.

Composition

A) Size and Age

The group should be composed of no more than 10 people, 5 students and 5 homeless youth, which will allow for good group discussion and activities that can be managed by one facilitator. Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 30 to participate.

B) Organization

The program will start off in a group setting to allow participants to build rapport and to establish trust. The first four groups will be structured with activities determined in advance (see Part D: Session Outlines). After one month, program participants will be placed into pairs and will engage in one-on-one activities on alternate weeks. During one-on-one weeks, the individual pairing can decide which activities they will engage in. On the weeks where no one-on-one activities take place, the group will meet at a pre-established time and location. At this time, the program participants will lead the group activities. Each pairing will have the opportunity to organize and facilitate one group session, where the emphasis will be on sharing experiences and cultural exchange. A schedule of presenters should be established by the end of the first four weeks of group activities so that each person knows when they are responsible for leading the group activity. Actual organization of the participant led activities should take place during session four and during one-on-one weeks with assistance from the facilitator as necessary. Finally, the program will end with a closing celebration attended by all program participants on the last group activity night.

The total length of the program is four months with a once per week session. The approximate time per session is 1 ½ to 2 hours and should take place on a weeknight. In order to decrease confusion, sessions should be held on the same day and at the same time every week. However, flexibility in terms of session times,

places and length can be arranged by the facilitator if the need arises due to the chosen activities or the needs and wants of the program participants.

C) Pair Formation

In order to create successful one-on-one pairings, the facilitator should try to match pairs based on interest and compatibility. In order to ensure that no one is left out, the facilitator needs to have the final say about who will be matched up in pairs, but should also try to allow the pairings to occur as naturally as possible. Additionally, it is important that each person feels comfortable in his or her pair and should talk to the facilitator if problems arise.

Commitment

In order to reach the program goals, it is important that there is a high level of commitment from all participants. Expectations need to be laid out before the program and each program participant should be accountable to the program. Additionally, homeless youth should continue to attend the program if they move out of Cunningham Place to live on their own. This scenario should be discussed at the beginning of the program so that the homeless youth are aware that they can continue the program even if they are no longer residents of Cunningham Place. Finally, small incentives throughout the program, as well as activities that are both meaningful and fun may help participants to stay committed.

-----5. Facilities-----

Having a facility that is convenient and comfortable for everyone is vital to the success of the program. Facilities should be reserved for the dates and times of the groups to ensure that participants have their own space. Necessary equipment should also be gathered prior to group meetings.

Location

The program will commence at Cunningham Place in a group meeting room that is open only to program participants. The room must be free from interruptions and private to allow participants to talk openly without fear of being overheard by others outside of the program. By starting at Cunningham Place, program participants will have the opportunity to get comfortable with one another in a safe environment before exploring other places. Once rapport has been established, the group can choose to meet at other locations. One suggestion is to meet at the University of Alberta. The location of group activities will be dependent on the activity itself and should be flexible to accommodate the needs of program participants. Transportation to and from group activities could be arranged through Native Counselling Services of Alberta if the location of the group is not easily accessible to both students and homeless youth. As one-on-one activities will be

determined by the pairing themselves, meeting locations could vary from week to week.

Equipment

The equipment necessary for each pre-planned group session is listed in the session outline. Additional equipment may be needed for future group sessions that are facilitated by the program participants. Equipment needs should be discussed with the facilitator prior to group meetings.

Part B: Orientation

Orientation is necessary in order to overcome some of the barriers to the success of this program and to prepare program participants for what lies ahead. Orientation is a mandatory component for all program participants and must be completed prior to program involvement.

-----1. Barriers-----

Several barriers may arise in this program. Potential barriers include:

- 6) A lack of understanding between the students and the homeless youth based on stereotypes, preconceived ideas and world views or ideology. This lack of understanding could result in difficulties in establishing rapport between the two groups.
- 7) A difficulty in accepting or adapting to a new culture that is outside of the comfort zone for either students or homeless youth. Some participants may feel that the groups are too far apart which could be intimidating. Furthermore, program participants may not know the rules or understand how to act in unfamiliar environments, which could cause anxiety.
- 8) A lack of commitment or follow-through by both students and homeless youth as a result of lack of motivation, transience, competing commitments or unclear expectations.
- 9) Logistical barriers including transportation issues and scheduling conflicts.
- 10) Addictions and other barriers including mental illness, FAS and learning disabilities, which may affect program participation or understanding.

In addition, program participants could be hesitant or uncertain about this program because they:

1. Worry that they won't fit in with the group
2. Fear that someone will try to change them
3. Feel that they won't be able to relate
4. Don't feel prepared for some of the situations that may arise

Although not all barriers can be eliminated, orientation that involves open communication about the aforementioned issues is essential to reduce the likelihood that barriers will interfere with program participation or enjoyment. Once program participants come to the realization that they share many of the same fears and apprehensions, many of the barriers will be reduced.

-----2. Orientation Components-----

Prior to orientation, a short informational session should be held for interested students and homeless youth. One session should be held at Cunningham Place and the other at the University of Alberta. The student session should provide an overview of the independent study, as determined by the professor responsible for the course, as well as information about the program itself. At that time they can decide if this program is a good fit for them and then sign up for the rest of the program if they are interested in participating. The facilitator could run this session.

The actual orientation should contain similar components for both students and homeless youth in order to keep the focus on cultural exchange and to increase equality. Orientation length should be discussed with program participants and appropriate orientation times should be determined.

The following section outlines the orientation components. Although respondents discussed several necessary components, a detailed orientation has not been included. Many existing organizations in Edmonton, including Native Counselling Services of Alberta, AADAC and the RCMP have orientation sessions that are already designed that would be appropriate for this program. Therefore, the orientation should consist of bringing together the community resources to deliver the sessions rather than starting from scratch and 'reinventing the wheel'. For this reason, only an outline of the components that key stakeholders thought would be important to include is provided. The facilitator should organize the actual orientation sessions.

Separate Orientation Components

In the first part of the orientation the students and the homeless youth will be separated so that they can receive and discuss information that is pertinent to successful participation in this program.

Student Orientation Sessions:

Session Topic:	Includes:	Potential Presenters:
Background Knowledge on Youth Homelessness and Culture	-family of origin issues -pathways to homelessness -statistics and population information -information on street life and culture -cultural sensitivity/awareness	-Currently or previously homeless youth or adult -Cunningham Place service provider -Program facilitator -Video from the group "I Human"
Relationship Development Skills	-diversity training -awareness exercises about prejudices, misconceptions, assumptions and ideologies - communication skills (non-verbal/verbal) -relationship building skills	-Staff from Native Counselling Services of Alberta -Program facilitator -Cunningham Place service provider
Drugs and Addictions	-types of drugs that are commonly used on the streets -effects of drug use -signs that someone is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs	-RCMP (D.A.R.E. Program) -AADAC representative
Mental Health	-suicide prevention -information about bereavement (i.e. how to be supportive when someone is grieving) -recognizing signs of depression -understanding the effects of mental illness (including unusual behaviors) -what to do if someone discloses abuse or other distressing information	-Cunningham Place service provider -U of A Student Distress Center -Mental health therapist
Safety	-healthy versus unhealthy boundaries -assertiveness skills -conflict management -universal precautions -practical information on how to keep yourself safe (safety plans)	-Cunningham Place service provider -Program facilitator

Homeless Youth Orientation Sessions:

Session Topic:	Includes:	Potential Presenters:
Background on University Students and Cultural Knowledge	-statistics and population information -information on student life and culture -cultural sensitivity/awareness	-Program facilitator -University student -U of A Student Distress Center -U of A Student's Union
Relationship Development Skills	-diversity training -awareness exercises about prejudices, misconceptions, assumptions and ideologies -communication skills (non-verbal/verbal) -relationship building skills	-Staff from Native Counselling Services of Alberta -Program facilitator -Cunningham Place service provider
Safety	-healthy versus unhealthy boundaries -assertiveness skills -conflict management -universal precautions -practical information on how to keep yourself safe (safety plans)	-Cunningham Place service provider -Program facilitator

Combined Orientation Components

Once program participants have completed the separate orientation components they should be brought together as a large group to finish the orientation.

Combined Orientation Sessions:

Session Topic:	Includes:	Potential Presenters:
Goal Setting	-a discussion about program goals, commitment and expectations -individual goal setting	-Program facilitator
Expectations and Establishing Ground Rules	-commitment -boundaries -discussion about what program participants expect from the program facilitator and the program itself -fill out waivers and other forms	-Program facilitator
Logistical Information	-dates -times -locations -transportation	-Program facilitator

In addition to discussing the above, the orientation should also be a time for participants to get to know one another in a comfortable setting and to have fun as a group.

Part C: Focus on Reciprocal Relationships and Cultural Exchange

---1. Establishing Reciprocal Relationships and Cultural Exchange---

In order to establish cultural exchange, it is important to begin with relationship formation. Therefore, activities in session 1-4 promote exchange between the participants in a safe and enjoyable manner. Cultural exchange will continue to be an important goal throughout the program and one-on-one sessions and participant-led activities should center on increasing understanding and reducing prejudice. All participants in this program have much to offer and the program should focus on the strengths and skills of each participant.

-----2. Roles-----

Although the roles of the facilitator, service provider, student and homeless youth vary, this program involves a teaching and learning component for all program participants. Engaging in and organizing activities that promote cultural exchange is also a role that will be assumed by all program participants.

A) Facilitator

The program facilitator has several roles and responsibilities within the program. They include:

1. To provide leadership and organization to the program.

A key role for the facilitator is to ensure that orientation and program activities are prepared in advance and that all necessary materials for group activities are on hand. Additionally, the facilitator should provide clear instructions to facilitate the successful completion of each orientation session or activity. Finally, the facilitator should ensure that all logistical information including room bookings or locations, transportation and meeting dates and times are established and shared with program participants. Above all, the facilitator must be flexible in conducting the groups and be able to adapt activities depending on group dynamics and interests.

2. To support program participants.

The facilitator should be available to assist all program participants if difficult situations arise. This includes actively listening to problems, mediating conflict and facilitating sharing between program participants. It is imperative that the facilitator does so in a non-judgmental and empathetic manner. Good communication skills and

patience are important skills for the facilitator to possess. Additionally, the facilitator must also be available to assist pairings in organizing participant-led activities if necessary.

3. To recruit and screen potential participants.

The facilitator is responsible for recruiting and screening program participants and will work with service providers at Cunningham Place and relevant University of Alberta departments.

4. To keep service providers informed about happenings within the program.

Service providers may not be directly involved in the program but it is important that they are made aware of program activities and any major issues or problems that arise during group or one-on-one activities.

B) Service Providers

Although direct program involvement by the service providers at Cunningham Place may be minimal due to already demanding workloads, service providers will play several roles within the overall program implementation. Their roles include:

1) To assist the facilitator in screening potential participants.

As service providers have regular contact with homeless youth through the services that are provided at Cunningham Place, they can assist the facilitator by suggesting potential candidates and ensuring that all program participants have completed an assessment before entering the program.

2) To foster a sense of excitement about the program with the residents of Cunningham Place and the clients of HOMEward integrated support services.

Service providers should encourage homeless youth to partake in the program and should help to create excitement about the program activities.

3) To assist the facilitator and/or program participants should the need arise.

Service providers can offer guidance and act as a resource person for both the program facilitator and the program participants should a situation arise that they are not equipped to handle.

4) To assist with orientation.

Many of the service providers have expertise in areas that will be the focus for orientation sessions. Therefore, service providers could be involved in delivering orientation sessions when applicable and feasible.

C) Students

Although the focus for this program is on a reciprocal exchange, focus group and individual interview respondents did articulate slightly different roles for students and homeless youth. However, it should be noted that each individual within the program will play a slightly different role and therefore, roles are flexible depending on individual abilities and needs.

1) To offer support.

Students should take on a supportive role in this program. Suggestions for ways that students can fulfill this role include offering encouragement and understanding, motivation and positive reinforcement. Students can also provide support by being someone that the homeless youth can talk to about their lives.

2) To be an advocate.

Students may also act as a resource person for the homeless youth. They can help the youth to access needed resources, offer guidance or assistance with goal setting and model healthy behaviors.

D) Homeless Youth

1) To educate students about their realities.

Homeless youth should help to educate students about their realities. This could include discussion about some of their family of origin issues, their struggles with addiction and criminal activity. Furthermore, the homeless youth can teach students about what it means to be resilient, to have courage and strength and about hope. Finally, homeless youth can also educate students about overcoming barriers and surviving challenges.

2) To be a resource person.

Homeless youth should assist students in understanding street life and culture.

Part D: Session Outlines

The basic program consists of four months of weekly program sessions. The length of time for each session will vary slightly depending on the group makeup and the chosen activity but will range between 1 ½ hours and 2 hours. Activities can be adjusted to meet time demands of program participants and must keep moving to prevent boredom.

The following section provides the facilitator with outlines for the first four sessions. The focus for these sessions will be on group formation and establishing rapport between group members. Additionally, participants should be placed into pairs and participant-led activities should be decided upon by the end of the fourth session.

All of the sessions must work towards meeting the program goals and participant-led activities must have concrete goals including cultural exchange. By allowing participants to facilitate many of the group sessions, a sense of ownership will be developed and the program will meet the individual needs of all participants.

Before each session, the facilitator is responsible for ensuring that all of the necessary set-up has been completed in order to ensure that the session runs smoothly. This could include making sure that all of the materials are on-hand, rearranging the room to facilitate the activities and setting up any activities that require preparation. Clean-up will be completed by all program participants and should be done on an on-going basis throughout the sessions and once the session is finished.

Overall Session Goals:

Sessions 1-4

- 1) Group formation and relationship development
- 2) Begin the cultural exchange process
- 3) Address stereotypes

Sessions 5-15

The goals for sessions 5-15 mimic the overall program goals.

Overarching goal:

- 1) Cultural Exchange: to provide homeless youth and university students with an opportunity to learn about each other's culture, with the intention of reducing prejudice and increasing understanding.

Sub-goals:

- 1) To form a trusting relationship.
- 2) To share life experiences.
- 3) To develop interpersonal and life skills specific to each program participant's needs.
- 4) To try new experiences.

During one-on-one sessions: one-on-one sessions should allow participants an opportunity to engage in activities that interest them and that allow them to form a trusting relationship with their partner. Activities should center on sharing life experiences and exchanging cultures. The facilitator should check-in with pairs at the end of group sessions to make sure that they have a plan for the following week.

During participant-led group sessions: the objectives of the group sessions is to allow participants an opportunity to teach other program participants about their culture in a way that is meaningful to them. Additionally, the participants who are leading the sessions will develop skills such as organizational skills, facilitation skills, communication skills and leadership skills.

Session 16

- 1) Closure: to provide participants with an opportunity to share successes and to celebrate.

-----Session 1-----

AGENDA	WHO	TIME
Welcome and Warm-up Activity - The Story of My Name	Group	15 min.
Ice-Breaker Activity - Make your Own Gingerbread Man	Group	20 min.
Break	Group	10 min.
Group Activity - Addressing Stereotypes: Skits	Group	60 min.
Closure - Check-In Circle	Group	15 min.

Purposes

- 1) Group formation and relationship development
- 2) Address stereotypes that exist about university students and homeless youth

Materials Needed

1. Gingerbread Man Cookies
2. Candy/Icing to decorate gingerbread men
3. Bowls for candy and icing
4. Butter Knives for decorating cookies
5. Napkins
6. Paper towel
7. Cleaning product for the tables
8. Props for skits
9. Flip chart paper
10. Markers
11. 'Talking tool'

Activities

1. Warm-up Activity: The Story of My Name

- Objectives:**
1. To learn each participant's name and the story behind their name.
 2. To allow participants to engage in an activity that will help them to get to know one another and to feel comfortable within the group.
- This activity can build intercultural respect and understanding, develop self-identity and encourage open sharing and respect.

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: None

Instructions:

- a. Have participants sit in a circle formation.
- b. One at a time, starting with the facilitator, have participants explain what their name means (if anything) and where it came from. Participants can choose to explain either their first or last name. If participants do not know where their name came from, encourage them to make up a story about where their name could have come from.
- c. Optional: Extend the activity to reveal the backgrounds behind other names:
 - Nicknames
 - Pets
 - Alter-ego or "fantasy name"

Note. The Story of my Name. by J. Neill (2004) Retrieved September 5, 2004, from Wilderdom Experiential Learning Web site:
www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/NameStory.html.
 Adapted with permission by the author.

2. Ice-Breaker Activity: Make your Own Gingerbread Man

Objectives: 1. Have participants do an activity that is fun and will help them to get to know one another on an informal basis.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

1. Gingerbread Man Cookies
2. Candy/Icing to decorate gingerbread men
3. Bowls for candy and icing
4. Butter Knives for decorating cookies
5. Napkins
6. Paper towel
7. Cleaning product for the tables

Instructions:

- a. Allow each participant to choose a gingerbread man cookie.
- b. Have different types of candy and icing set out on a table.
- c. Give participants the 5 minutes to decorate the gingerbread man so that it represents them in some way. Participants should also try to incorporate their name on the cookie.
- d. Once participants have had the chance to decorate the cookies, have each person share why they chose to decorate the cookie the way they did or why they chose certain candies. Enjoy!

Note: The facilitator should make note of which participants naturally work together or talk with one another so that they can form pairs that will work well together.

3. Addressing Stereotypes: Skits

Objectives:

1. To expose the stereotypes that are held about university students and homeless youth.
2. To discuss how stereotypes affect your life and how they can misrepresent who you really are.

Time: 1 hour

Materials: 1. Props

Instructions:

- a. Spend 10 minutes brainstorming all of the stereotypes that the group can think of with regards to university students and homeless youth. Write all of the stereotypes on flip chart paper.
- b. Separate the group so that one group is composed of homeless youth and the other of university students.
- c. Give the groups approximately 30 minutes to create a short (2-5 min.) skit that demonstrates the stereotypes that they came up with in an exaggerated and comedic way.
- d. Have each group perform their skit in front of the other group.
- e. Once both groups have had an opportunity to perform their skit, take 15 minutes to debrief. Questions that the facilitator could ask include:
 - How did you feel when you first brainstormed the stereotypes that exist about your group? The other group?
 - What was it like to participate in a skit where you exaggerated and poked fun at the stereotypes about your group?
 - How did you feel when you watched the other group perform their skit?
 - How do stereotypes affect you? How does being placed in a category make you feel?
 - Do you see any truth to the stereotypes? How so?
 - Which stereotypes do you feel misrepresent who you really are?

4. Closure

Objectives:

1. To give program participants an opportunity to talk about the evening.
2. To provide closure to the session.

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: 1. 'Talking tool'

Instructions:

- a. Have participants sit in a circle.
- b. Explain that each person will have an opportunity to talk about his or her experiences during the session.
- c. With the participant's help, choose an object that will become the 'talking tool'. Only the person that has the 'talking tool' can speak. Begin on your left and work your way around the circle until everyone has had a chance to speak. Give each participant the opportunity to speak about how they felt about the first session, what they liked, what they did not like, etc.
- d. Finish the group by reminding participants about the next session and ensuring that everyone knows the meeting time and place.

-----Session 2-----

AGENDA	WHO	TIME
Ice-Breaker Activity – Let's Draw a House	Group	30 min.
Group Activity – Life Maps	Group	45 min.
Break	Group	10 min.
Snack – Pizza and a drink	Group	20 min.
Closure – Check-in Circle	Group	15 min.

Purposes

- 1) Group formation and relationship development
- 2) To start the cultural exchange process

Materials Needed

1. Pencils
2. Paper
3. End of the roll newsprint (white paper in long sheets)
4. Markers, pencil crayons, crayons
5. Snack (pizza and drinks)
6. Napkins
7. Cups
8. Garbage Bag
9. Paper towel
10. Cleaning product for the tables
11. 'Talking tool'

Activities**1. Ice-Breaker Activity: Let's Draw a House**

Objectives: 1. To have participants engage in an activity that encourages sharing between the homeless youth and the students.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: 1. Pencils
2. Paper

Instructions:

- a. Place participants into pairs, one homeless youth with one university student. Give each pair a piece of paper and a pencil.
- b. Tell the participants that they must draw a house as a team. There are several rules:
 - No talking.
 - Both people on the team must hold the same pencil during the whole activity.
- c. After a few minutes, tell the groups to stop. Have the groups show their houses to the rest of the group members.
- d. Once everyone has shown his or her house, take a few minutes to debrief. Possible questions include:
 - What happened for you during the activity?
 - What do you think influenced cooperation or competition between you and your partner during this activity?
 - How did your visualization of a "house" influence your drawing?
 - How was your visualization the same as or different from your partners?
 - How could this apply to a real-life situation?

Note: This activity provides the facilitator with an opportunity to observe if chosen pairings work well together and enjoy each other's company.

2. Starting the Cultural Exchange Process: Life Maps

Objectives:

1. To understand cultural learned patterns.
2. To encourage cultural exchange among participants through storytelling.

Time: 45 minutes

Materials:

1. Paper
2. Markers, pencil crayons or crayons

Instructions:

- a. Give each participant a large piece of paper and some crayons or markers.
- b. Have participants draw a map of their life. They should include pictures or words that represent the events, the people, the places and the decisions that have had an effect on their lives. Try to have participants think from a cultural perspective.
- c. Have the participants think about which events were positive experiences and which were negative. They can put a mark of their choice beside the experiences to represent whether they had a positive or negative impact on their life.

- d. Have participants share their life map. Give each person the opportunity to show the map to the rest of the group and to describe the different events that they have included and the impact that those events have had on their lives.
- e. Discussion questions may include the following:
 - If you were to redraw the picture, would you include the same events? What would be different?
 - Did you know at the time of the event how important it would be to you?
 - Would you change your story if you could?
 - What did you learn from the stories told by other people in the group?

Note. Life Map. By R. Benson (2004) Retrieved September 8, 2004, from First Steps Training Web site:
www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity_lifemap.htm
 Adapted with permission by the author.

3. **Snack** (pizza and a drink)

Objectives: 1. To allow participants a chance to talk with each other informally and to unwind.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

- 1. Pizza
- 2. Drinks
- 3. Napkins
- 4. Cups
- 5. Paper towel
- 6. Cleaning product for the tables

Instructions:

- a. Have participants share in a snack, which offers them a chance to talk informally, get to know one another on a more personal-level and to wind-down from the session.
- b. Encourage the students and the homeless youth to mix with one another during this time.

4. **Closure**

Objectives:

- 1. To give program participants an opportunity to talk about the evening.
- 2. To provide closure to the session.

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: 1. 'Talking tool'

Instructions:

- a. Have participants sit in a circle.
- b. Using the 'talking tool', allow participants to talk about their experiences one by one.
- c. Discuss any concerns that come up and address any questions from program participants.

-----Session 3-----

AGENDA	WHO	TIME
Warm-up Activity – Team Tag	Group	30 min.
Pair Formation – Place program participants into their pairs	Facilitator	10 min.
Break	Group	10 min.
Group Activity – Two-Sided Masks	Group	55 min.
Closure – Check-In Circle	Group	15 min.

Purposes

- 1) Group formation and relationship development with an emphasis on establishing trust
- 2) To begin the cultural exchange process (masks will be made during Session 3 and participants will continue the process during Session 4 when they paint the masks and share the reasons that they painted their masks the way that they did)
- 3) To start the formation of one-on-one pairings

Materials Needed

1. Colored wooden clothespins (nine blue, nine red, nine green and nine yellow)
2. Plaster cast rolls (cut into small rectangles, stored in a container)
3. Plastic containers filled with water (i.e. empty yogurt or margarine containers)
4. Vaseline
5. Blindfolds (long strips of material)
6. 5 Old paint shirts
7. Paper towel
8. Garbage bags
9. Cleaning product for the tables
10. 'Talking tool'

Activities**1. Warm-up Activity: Team Tag**

Objectives: 1. To have participants engage in an activity that is energizing and gets them working together as a team.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: 1. Colored wooden clothespins

Instructions:

Explain that this activity is a competition between the teams. The object of the game is to be the first team to pin all of your clothespins on the backs of your opponents, while keeping at least one person on your team clothespin free.

- a. Designate as observers those wearing jackets or tops which will not be easy to pin. Divide the group into teams of three.
- b. Explain that this activity is a walking tag game in which team members clip their clothespins on the back of opposing team members' shirts or jackets.
- c. Present the rules as follows:
 - "You cannot remove a clothespin from yourself.
 - You may pick up one of your team's clothespins if it is on the ground.
 - You may walk quickly but not jog or run.
 - You must stay within the boundaries at all times"
- d. Note that the observers can disqualify any team whom they feel has violated the rules.
- e. Tell participants that the winner is the first team to rid itself of all its clothespins so that none of them are on the ground and at least one team member has no clothespins on his/her back.
- f. Quickly begin the game after you have given the members of each team three similarly colored clothespins. You do not want them to have time to plan a strategy.
- g. If there is a winner or if a winner has not emerged after about 5 minutes, call a time out. At this stage allow each team a few minutes to plan.
- h. When the planning time is up, start the game. If no winner emerges after about 5 minutes end the game and declare them all winners.
- i. Conduct a review. (Note: Winning in this activity is infrequent and more often occurs in the unplanned segment.)

Note. From: Changing Pace: Outdoor Games for Experiential Learning. By Carmine Consalvo (1996) HRD Press, Inc. Adopted with permission

2. Pair Formation

Objectives: 1. To place participants into one-on-one pairs.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: None

Instructions:

- a. Place the participants into their one-on-one pairs.
- b. Instruct the pairs to think about what they would like to do for their first one-on-one activity, which will take place in two weeks. During mask making, the pairs can talk about some of the activities that they would like to do together and come up with an idea for their first activity.

Note: The following activity provides the facilitator with a good opportunity to observe the pairs. At that time, the facilitator can make a final decision about whether or not the pair is a good match.

3. Two-Sided Masks

Objectives: 1. To build trust between one-on-one pairs.

Time: 55 minutes

Materials:

1. Plaster cast rolls (cut into small rectangles, stored in a container)
2. Plastic containers filled with water (i.e. empty yogurt or margarine containers)
3. Vaseline
4. Blindfolds (long strips of material)
5. 5 Old paint shirts
6. Paper towel
7. Garbage bags
8. Cleaning product for the tables

Instructions:

- a. Have participants pair up (this would be a good activity to have those who will be paired up for one-on-one sessions to work together). Have one partner sit and one stand (the person who is sitting will have the mask made for them first).
- b. Have the person who is sitting put on one of the old paint shirts and use one of the blindfolds to pull back any hair that is on their face. The person who is standing covers the other person's face with vaseline. Make sure that their entire face is covered especially eyebrows and the tiny hairs that frame the face. The vaseline will help to ensure that the mask slides easily off of the face and does not pull at the skin or hair.
- c. Once the face is completely covered in vaseline, the mask-making begins.
- d. Dip one piece of the plaster cast into water (have one container of water set out for each pair). Make sure that the piece of plaster cast is completely wet.

- e. Place the piece on the sitting person's face. It is a good idea to start on the cheeks and finish the mouth and eyes last. (Note: covering the mouth and eyes are optional)
 - f. Repeat the process until the entire face is covered. Smooth out any bumps with fingertips dipped in water. The plaster cast pieces should overlap to create a mask with no holes that is sturdy once dried. (Note: the plaster cast pieces can be folded in half so that it fits in small places like between the nose and mouth)
 - g. Allow the mask to dry. (Note: the mask should be quite hard before it is removed to prevent it from breaking)
 - h. Mask removal: the person who is wearing the mask should be able to remove his or her own mask (their partner can help out where necessary). Have the person hold the mask on either side of their face. Slowly pull the mask off as gently as possible. (Note: encourage the person to scrunch their nose, eyes and cheeks as that will help them to remove the mask easier) If the mask sticks anywhere on the face, gently pull the mask away from the area.
 - i. Switch partners and repeat the process.
 - j. Place each mask on a piece of paper with their name on it to allow them to dry until the following week.
 - k. Clean tables and floor.
- (Note: This activity can also be done with paper plates with holes cut out for eyes and some ribbon or string attached to the sides. Participants may be hesitant at first to have the plaster mask made but usually enjoy the experience once they get started.)

4. Closure

- Objectives:
- 1. To give program participants an opportunity to talk about their mask-making experience.
 - 2. To start to plan participant's first one-on-one activity.
 - 3. To get participants thinking about what they would like to do for their participant-led session.
 - 4. To provide closure to the session.

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: 1. 'Talking tool'

Instructions:

- a. Using the 'talking tool', allow each participant an opportunity to talk about his or her mask-making experience.
- b. Then, ask each pair what they have decided to do for their first one-on-one activity. If the pairs have not been able to come up with anything, brainstorm some ideas as a group. The feasibility of the activity should also be discussed at this time.

- c. Have participants think about what they would like to do for their participant-led group activity so that they will be prepared to talk about it during the next session. Session 4 includes time to talk about and organize how participant-led activities will work.
- d. Remind everyone that the next week is still a group activity.

-----Session 4-----

AGENDA	WHO	TIME
Warm-up Activity – Check-In	Group	10 min.
Group Activity – Mask Painting	Group	45 min.
Group Activity – Discussion Regarding Participant-Led Activities	Group	45 min.
Closure – Check-In Circle	Group	20 min.

Purposes

- 1) The purpose of the first half of the session is to finish the masks and engage in cultural exchange through the telling of the story behind the mask.
- 2) The purpose of the second half of the session is to establish participant-led group activities and to ensure that participants are prepared for one-on-one activities the following week.

Materials Needed

1. Paint brushes
2. Paint
3. Plastic containers filled with water (i.e. empty yogurt or margarine containers)
4. Lids from the plastic containers (to mix paint colors on)
5. Pencils
6. Paper
7. Paper towel
8. Cleaning product for the tables

Activities

1. Check-In

- Objectives:
1. To give participants a chance to talk about their week.
 2. To allow participants a chance to get reacquainted before beginning to paint the masks.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: None

Instructions:

- a. Have participants sit in a circle and give each person an opportunity to talk about something that happened during the last week.

2. Cultural Exchange: Mask Painting

- Objectives:**
1. To allow participants to explore how they portray themselves differently on the outside than how they feel on the inside.
 2. To exchange cultures by sharing about the masks.
 3. To examine the differences and similarities between the ways in which participants see themselves and the ways in which they believe others see them.

Time: 45 minutes

- Materials:**
1. Paint brushes
 2. Paint
 3. Plastic containers filled with water (i.e. empty yogurt or margarine containers)
 4. Lids from the plastic containers (to mix paint colors on)
 5. Paper towel
 6. Cleaning product for the tables

Instructions:

- a. Have the participants paint the outside of their mask to reflect how they believe others see them or what they believe others see when they look at them.
- b. Once they are finished the outside, have them paint the inside of the mask to reflect how they see themselves.
- c. Once everyone has had an opportunity to paint his or her mask, take a few minutes to debrief. Questions that the facilitator could ask include:
 - How do you see yourself?
 - How do you think others see you?
 - Are there any similarities between the way you see yourself and the way that others see you?
 - What are the differences between the two?

3. Discussion regarding participant-led activities

- Objectives:**
1. To make decisions regarding future participant-led sessions.

Time: 45 minutes

- Materials:**
1. Pencils
 2. Paper

Instructions:

- a. Give participants 30 minutes to talk about what they would like to do during the group session that they have to facilitate. Keep in mind that the focus for the participant-led group activities is on cultural exchange, so the activities that the pairs choose must contribute to cultural exchange in some way.
- b. Outline that each pair must come up with a plan that involves a purpose, an activity or several activities that will last about 1 to 1 ½ hours and a closure. The total length of the session should be no more than 2 hours.
- c. After 30 minutes, have a group discussion about what the pairs have chosen. If there are conflicts, have the pairs work things out.
- d. Finally, assign a date for each pair to facilitate the session. Explain to the group that the pairs can use their one-on-one time to plan the details of their night. Make sure that the pairs know that they can ask the facilitator for assistance in planning the activities if needed.

Note: The facilitator could arrange to be at the one-on-one meetings with the pair who will be leading the following weeks activity to help them to make final preparations so that all of the group sessions are organized. This could also be arranged during this activity.

4. Closure: Check-In Circle

Objectives:

1. To give program participants an opportunity to talk about the evening.
2. To provide closure to the session.
3. To talk about what participants have learned so far in the program.
4. To ensure that all of the pairings have a plan for one-on-one activities.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: 1. 'Talking tool'

Instructions:

- a. Have participants sit in a circle.
- b. Using the 'talking tool', allow participants to talk about their experiences one by one. Have participants share something that they have learned since the beginning of the program.
- c. Discuss any concerns that come up and address any questions from program participants.
- d. Once everyone has had a chance to share, give each one-on-one pair an opportunity to confirm their plans for the following week. Ensure that everyone knows where they will be meeting and that they have check-in and safety plans in place.

Alternate Activities or Activities for Future Groups

The following activities can be substituted for activities in Session 1-4 or can be used on group days during the rest of the program as needed.

1. What Would You Do?

- Objectives:
1. To engage in cultural exchange.
 2. To learn about day-to-day life of the other group.

Time: 30 minutes

- Materials:
1. Pencils
 2. Paper
 3. Flip chart paper
 4. Markers

Instructions:

- a. Divide the group into homeless youth and university students.
- b. Have the homeless youth and the university students create a questionnaire for each other. The questions on the questionnaire should ask, "What would you do in _____ (this scenario)?" Each question should relate to their lives. Aim for between 5 and 10 questions. For example:
 - What would you do if you didn't have anywhere to sleep that night?
 - What would you do if you were addicted to drugs?
 - What would you do if you have to wash your clothes and you have no washer and dryer and no money?
 - What would you do if you needed to study for a midterm?
 - What would you do if you didn't agree with a mark that you got on a paper?
 - What would you do if you were stressed out because you are trying to balance school with a part-time job?
- c. Once the groups have finished making the questionnaire, they should write the questions in big letters on flip chart paper so that everyone can see the questions.
- d. Ask everyone to take ten minutes to try to answer the questions that the opposite group has asked.
- e. After everyone has had a chance to answer the questions, discuss the questions one at a time. Questions could include:
 - Were the questions difficult to answer? Why?
 - Did you get any of the answers right? Why were you able to answer those questions?
 - What do these questions tell you about the opposite group?

Note. Adapted from: Personal communication with focus group participant (homeless youth)

2. Fear in a Hat

Objectives: 1. To openly acknowledge fears, anxieties and worries without being embarrassed or subject to ridicule.

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: 1. Paper
2. Pencils or pens
3. Hat

Instructions:

- a. Ask everyone, including the facilitator, to complete this sentence on a piece of paper (anonymously): "In this program, I am most afraid that...." or "In this program, the worst thing that could happen to me would be..."
- b. Collect the pieces of paper, put them in the hat and mix them around, then invite each person to take a piece of paper and read about someone's fear.
- c. One by one, each group member reads out the fear of another group member and elaborates about what he or she feels that person is most afraid of in this group. No one is to comment on what the person says, just listen and move on to the next person.
- d. If the reader doesn't elaborate much on the fear, then ask them one or two questions. Avoid implying or showing your opinion as to the fear being expressed, unless the person is disrespecting or completely misunderstanding someone's fear. If the person doesn't elaborate after one or two questions, leave it and move on.
- e. When all the fears have been read out and elaborated on, then discuss what people felt and noticed.
- f. Variations: likes and dislikes in two separate hats, worries

Note. Fear in a Hat. by J. Neill (2004) Retrieved September 10, 2004, from Wilderdom Experiential Learning Web site:
www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/FearInAHat.html
Adopted with permission by the author.

3. Scavenger Hunt (one week in the inner city/one week at the University of Alberta)

Objectives: 1. To experience a different environment.
2. To engage in cross-cultural exchange.

Time: 1 ½ hours

- Materials:**
1. Scavenger hunt lists (can include both items that the groups need to collect and questions that they need to answer)
 2. Pencils

Instructions:

- a. Divide the group into teams of 2 or 3.
- b. Give teams a list of items that they must find (can also be questions that they must answer). Set a time limit so that each team knows when they must meet back at the starting place.
- c. Possible items include:
 - Name of a place where you can wash your clothes
 - What bus routes pass in front of _____ (name of a shelter or university building)
 - How many steps are there in front of _____ (name of building)
 - What color is the door of the student distress center
 - Where would you go to buy bus tickets? How much do they cost?
 - Collect a pamphlet that explains what the student's union does
 - Etc.

4. Relay Race

- Objectives:**
1. To have fun.
 2. To challenge oneself (especially if the participant has to eat something that they dislike)

Time: 10-15 minutes

- Materials:**
1. Black garbage bag
 2. 2 Garbage cans (with a garbage bag)
 3. Napkins
 4. Food Including:
 - Baby food jar (peas)
 - Chocolate Bar
 - Raw potato (very small)
 - Pudding Cup
 - Green Onion
 - Etc.

Instructions:

- a. Divide the group into two teams.
- b. Have the teams line up at one end of the room. At the opposite end of the room, set up two chairs beside each other. The facilitator should stand in the middle of the two chairs holding the black garbage bag with all of the food items in it.

- c. When the facilitator says go, the first person from each team must run to the chair and sit down. The first person to sit down gets to pick their food item out of the garbage bag first. They must reach into the bag and quickly pull out the first item that they grab. Once they have pulled an item out, they must eat whatever it is as quickly as possible. As soon as the first person has selected an item, the second person does the same.
 - d. After they have finished eating their food item they must run back to the starting line and tag the next person in line. That person then runs to the chair and picks an item. The relay continues until everyone has had a chance to pick something out of the bag and eat it.
 - e. The winning team could get a small prize or everyone could get something for participating.
- (Note: place a garbage can beside each chair for garbage and provide napkins for participants)

5. Four Hands on Clay

- Objectives:
- 1. To work cooperatively on a task.
 - 2. To experience an activity without the use of all five senses.
 - 3. To understand how different people conceptualize different things in different ways.

Time: 15 minutes

- Materials:
- 1. 5 Lumps of Clay
 - 2. 10 Blindfolds
 - 3. Paper towel
 - 4. Cleaning solution for the tables

- Instructions:
- a. Place 5 lumps of clay and two blindfolds on a table (one lump per pair)
 - b. Have participants pair up and sit down at the table beside their partner. Place the lump of clay between the partners. Have each participant put their blindfold on.
 - c. The pairs should then try to create a predetermined object (a car for example), molded out of clay. During the activity, they must keep all four of their hands on the clay at all times. They may speak to each other but they cannot look at their creation until the five minutes is up.
 - d. After five minutes have passed, have the participants remove their blindfolds and look at their creation.
 - e. Debrief.

6. Creating a Collage

Objectives: 1. To have the participants create a collage that is a reflection of what they have learned so far in the program.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

1. Magazines
2. Scissors
3. Construction paper
4. Glue
5. Markers
6. One large piece of poster paper

Instructions:

- a. Allow participants to glue pictures, draw pictures and write on a piece of construction paper.
- b. Each person should do an individual collage and then the facilitator should paste all of the individual collages onto a big piece of poster paper to represent the group.
- c. During this activity, encourage each person to share one thing that they have learned about themselves or about someone else through the program.

Other Activities

The following is a list of possible program activities that were brought up during interviews with homeless youth, university students and service providers. These activities could be done during one-on-one weeks or could be used for ideas for participant-led sessions.

- Volunteering: at soup kitchens (the Mustard Seed)
- Field Trips: go to a park, go camping, go to the public library, go to the movies, go out for coffee, attend a Pow-Wow, round dance or other cultural event, go to an AA meeting in the community, go to the South side (or other parts of Edmonton that the youth have never seen), exchange social environments (start with the homeless youth's environment then move out into the community after rapport has been established)
- Drama/Music: create a video about Crystal Meth that could help to educate others, karaoke, listen to music, play music, story-telling, movie making (some participants could be the actors, some the directors, some the crew)
- Sports: swimming, racquetball, baseball, football, soccer, hockey, watch a sporting event (possibly at the University), bowling, billiards, volleyball, track day (with lots of fun events), learn a new sport, any activities in a gymnasium
- Group Activities: group could participate in a new activity in the community, group could get involved in something that no one have never done before,

that they would enjoy, that they would be successful at, any activities that open up conversation so that people can really get to know each other, spend a night on the streets to see what it's like, visit soup kitchens, the university, shelters, the street, icebreakers (get people talking about their lives), learn coping strategies for stress reduction, cooking, , have a guest speaker, have a party at the end of the program to celebrate successes

- Games: board games (Monopoly)
- Fundraising: the program could involve activities that would help to fundraise for the program itself and recreational equipment for Cunningham Place
- Art: pottery, various arts and crafts, camera work (give each person a camera and ask them to take pictures during the week that represent their lives, have the film developed and then arrange the pictures so that they tell a story, share the stories), painting
- Advocate for the Youth/Help Youth to Access Resources: students should have access to a resource binder that contains all of the resources that homeless youth can access and they should help the youth to connect with appropriate resources

Part E: Safety

-----1. Boundaries-----

Establishing healthy boundaries from the onset is key to participant safety and program success. Boundaries need to be clearly articulated so that program participants are aware of where the relationships begin and end and what the expectations are in terms of maintaining healthy boundaries. Discussions about boundaries must take place both during orientation sessions and throughout the program. Additionally, consequences for inappropriate actions must be laid out at the beginning of the program. Several scenarios with regards to unhealthy boundaries should be discussed with all program participants during orientation and participants should be equipped to deal with situations that may arise.

Examples of potential scenarios include:

- a) Developing a Crush
- b) Wanting to attend a party (where alcohol and/or drugs may or may not be present)
- c) Being asked to lend money to another program participant
- d) Too much self-disclosure by a program participant
- e) Engaging in illegal activities while in the presence of other program participants
- f) Over-empathizing or becoming too involved with another program participant
- g) Playing counselor or psychologist during group or one-on-one activities

Most importantly, program participants must respect one another's boundaries and any issues around unhealthy boundaries should be discussed and dealt with by the program facilitator.

-----2. Potential Safety Issues and Maintaining Personal Safety-----

Maintaining the safety of all participants must be a priority. In order to ensure that all participants remain safe, several safety plans or systems need to be in place.

- 1) Check-In System: when participants are engaging in one-on-one activities they must check in with the program facilitator or a trusted friend prior to and upon completion of the activity
- 2) Public Meetings: all one-on-one activities must take place in public places
- 3) Criminal Record Checks: all students must complete a criminal record check prior to program involvement
- 4) No Identifying Information: participants should not give other participants home phone numbers, addresses or use last names
- 5) Working Alone Guidelines: all program participants should follow the working alone guidelines (see Appendix H) when engaging in one-on-one activities – in an emergency participants should call 9-1-1
- 6) Orientation: orientation should provide program participants with information regarding potential scenarios (i.e. violence, unusual behaviour, drug use) and skills to deal with those situations in an appropriate manner

-----3. Policies and Ethical Guidelines-----

Several program policies must be in place to ensure the ethical conduct of all program participants and to prevent any liabilities that may arise. Students and homeless youth must sign the appropriate forms before participation in the program (see Appendices E-G).

Appendix E: Ethical Guidelines (University of Alberta)

All students are expected to adhere to certain guidelines for ethical, responsible conduct. This is necessary for the benefit and protection of the students themselves, as well as for the clients/customers, agencies, Coordinator and the University. Basic guidelines are described below. Students are also expected to learn and adhere to the broader ethical guidelines dictated by their relevant profession (e.g. AHEA, NCFR), as well as the guidelines specific to Cunningham Place. If students have questions about ethics or responsible conduct they should contact the Coordinator. At a minimum, students agree to adhere to the following principles:

1. *Confidentiality*

The identity of clients/customers, or information that would reveal the identity of clients/customers, cannot be revealed without specific permission, except in cases where a client may be a danger to themselves or to others, and in cases of child abuse.

Sensitive information regarding the agency, its employees, and its activities, is strictly confidential. Agency information discussed in class must be prepared and presented in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

2. *Recognition of qualifications and limitations*

Students must recognize the limitations to their training and abilities and must not exceed those in their course work. Students must recognize when situations are beyond their knowledge or ability and seek assistance from their Coordinator when such situations arise.

3. *Identification as Practicum Students*

Students will identify themselves as students to their clients/customers, in report writing and in other professional activities while they are involved in programming at Cunningham Place. They will not misrepresent their training, qualifications, or status.

4. *Record Keeping*

Students will accurately and reliably maintain written and other records as required by the program.

5. *Dual Relationships*

Students will refrain from working with persons with whom the student is already involved in other types of relationships. For example, it would not be ethical for a practicum student to counsel someone who was a fellow student in class.

6. Prohibition regarding Sexual Conduct or Harassment

Under no circumstances shall students become involved in sexual or romantic relationships of any sort with clients/customers or co-workers at Cunningham Place. Students will also refrain from sexual harassment and will respect the sensitivity of others regarding sexual matters.

7. Self-Awareness and Monitoring

Students will monitor their own emotional and physical status and should be aware of any conditions that might adversely impact their ability to conduct work for the program. If such conditions arise, students should inform the coordinator and instructor.

8. Ethics Discussion with Coordinator

Students must discuss the ethical standards of Cunningham Place and the program with their Coordinator before performing work. Space is provided at the bottom of this form to indicate that such discussions have taken place and that the student has been informed of ethical expectations.

By signing below, the student agrees to adhere to the guidelines listed above as well as those of the professional discipline and Cunningham Place.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

Instructor: _____ Date: _____

Adapted from: Baird, Brian N. (1996). The Internship, Practicum and Field Placement Handbook: A Guide for the Helping Professions. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey.

THIS INDENTURE made this _____ day of _____, A.D. 2005.

BETWEEN:

Appendix F: Student Affiliation Agreement (University of Alberta)

**THE FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND HOME
ECONOMICS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**
(hereinafter called "the University")

- and -

**Native Counselling Services of Alberta
Cunningham Place
9330-104 Ave.
Edmonton, AB.
T5H 0H9**
(hereinafter called "the Placement Site")

WHEREAS it is in the interests of the University and the Placement Site that the facilities and services of the Placement Site be utilized by students in the degree programs for human ecologists, and the assigned teaching staff of the Department of Human Ecology, the University of Alberta (hereinafter called "the Department").

THEREFORE the following is agreed upon between the University and the Placement Site with respect thereto:

1. This Affiliation Agreement shall be effective from ____ to ____ for students registered in Winter Term and from ____ to ____ for students registered in Spring Term.
2. This Agreement may be terminated at any time during the term hereof by mutual agreement of both parties or by either party upon thirty (30) days' notice in writing to that effect given to the other party.
3. The terms of this Agreement may be revised at any time by mutual agreement of the parties.

4. The responsibilities of the Placement Site are as follows:
 - a) The Placement Site shall provide placement for an agreed number of students.
 - b) Students and the instructor from the Department shall have access to the facilities of the Placement Site for mutually agreed upon periods.
 - c) Students shall be provided with practical experience of a high standard under the supervision of qualified personnel of the Placement Site.
 - d) Opportunity shall be provided for consultation between the staff of the Placement Site and the Department in order to evaluate the program and solve problems of mutual concern.
 - e) Students shall be provided with suitable areas to work and provide for the safekeeping of personal belongings.
 - f) Only supplies and equipment requisite for the carrying out of duties assigned to the individual students shall be supplied by the Placement Site.
 - g) The Placement Site shall have in effect public liability insurance covering their own employees or agents in an amount to protect it and the other party from any claims or damages for personal injury including death, and from claims for property damage caused by the negligence or wrongdoing of the party so insured.
 - h) The Placement Site agrees that it will not require any student to perform any task unless such task might reasonably be expected to be within the scope of the Student's training and abilities.
5. The responsibilities of the University shall be as follows:
 - a) The Department shall submit to the contact or designate of the Placement Site, a plan concerning the number of students and pertinent information as requested by the Placement Site.
 - b) Students and instructors of the Department shall hold in confidence any information pertaining to the Placement Site or the staff or the clients of the Placement Site that comes to their knowledge during the conduct of the program.
 - c) Students and instructors shall cooperate with and adhere to policies and regulations of the Placement Site.

- d) A program of health care for full-time students at the University of Alberta shall be provided by University Health Services, University of Alberta, Edmonton.
 - e) Academic Coordinators shall make students aware of University of Alberta policies on discrimination and harassment.
 - f) Except for stipends and honoraria, students will receive no remuneration for services rendered during the course of the educational program.
 - g) The University agrees to hold harmless the Placement Site, its employees and agents from any and all third party claims, demands, or actions that may arise out of the negligent acts or omissions of the University, the University's employees or agents, or the students, in their performance of this Agreement, unless such negligent acts or omissions are at the direction of or occasioned by the Placement Site, its employees or agents.
6. The University hereby advises the Placement Site that it has in effect a policy of general liability insurance which insures the University, members of its faculties, academic consultants, employees or any other persons while acting on behalf of the University within the scope of their duties, whether receiving compensation or not from the University. The University further advises the Placement Site that the term "other persons" is interpreted by the brokers and insurers as including the students to whom this Affiliation Agreement has reference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have affixed their common seals, duly authenticated by their proper officers in this regard all as of the day and year first above written.

The Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics at the University of Alberta

Per: _____
(Name)

Native Counselling Services of Alberta

Per: _____
(Name)

Appendix G – Waiver Form

To Whom It May Concern:

By signing this Liability Waiver Form, I _____ accept all responsibility of actions, events and behavior during the course of this program and during program activities. I will not hold Native Counselling Service of Alberta or the University of Alberta responsible for any injuries, theft, accidents or violations of law during the entire length of the program.

Participant Signature: _____

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____